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Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XVIII, Issue No. 46 | FRIDAY FEBRUARY 15, 2008 | www.saipantribune.com | 50¢

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:
Do you intend to celebrate Valentine's Day this year?

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Sweet Valentine
Valentine's Day is a sweet one for Continental Micronesia employees.
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High Alert
Philippine security forces are on high alert amid concerns that communist rebels planned to infiltrate protests.
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Saipan Superstar
The semi-finals round of the Saipan Singing Superstar was held at the lobby of Saipan Grand Hotel on Friday last week.
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Fitial vows to lower power rates before term ends. **PAGE 3**
OSHA fines Garapan firm $59.4K. **PAGE 8**

Q4 down across the board

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

The Department of Commerce released its fourth quarter Economic Indicator report yesterday and it confirmed what everyone in the Commonwealth already suspects—the islands' economy is still in bad shape.

Across the board, Commerce's data revealed a downcast picture of the Commonwealth's business activity in the final three months of 2007.

Business gross revenue, for instance, dropped 8.6 percent last year to $1.67 million from the $1.82 million recorded in 2006.

The figure is the lowest since 2002 when revenue generated by all private companies in the Commonwealth totaled $1.86 million. This increased by 2.4 percent in 2003 to $1.9 million. The upswing continued in 2004 when BGR increased by 6.3 percent to $2.03 million before falling in 2005 and 2006 by 0.7 percent and 9.5 percent to $2.02 million and $1.82 million, respectively.

Government expenditure,

See Q4 DOWN on Page 4

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ
Tourists gather for a souvenir picture on Micro Beach. Visitor arrivals dropped 10.6 percent in 2007 to 389,261 tourists from the 435,494 visitor arrival recorded in 2006.

Prices of commodities continue rise

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

The cost of basic consumer goods rose 2.1 percent in the fourth quarter of last year, further underlining the higher prices spent by CNMI residents for food, housing and utilities, medical care, education and communication, recreation, alcoholic beverages, and apparel.

According to data from

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HEALTHY HEART WALK JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ
Saipan International School students, parents and teachers walk and run along the pathway from Minachom Atdao pavilion near Kilili Beach down to the Quartermaster intersection on Beach Road yesterday as they observe their 12th Annual Healthy Heart Walk. Over 200 participated in the event, which aims to promote physical activity and heart-healthy living in a fun family environment.

Fisherman drowns near COP cliff line

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

A 38-year-old man drowned after he tried to retrieve his catch from the ocean while fishing at the cliff line near the Coral Ocean Point in Koblerville yesterday morning.

Roberto R. Raqueto was taken to the Commonwealth Health Center where he was pronounced dead due to drowning at 11:15pm.

Department of Public Safety spokesperson Lei Ogumoro said preliminary investigation

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'Water overdue for rate hike'

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

A consultant for the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. says adjustments to the water and wastewater rates may be overdue.

Dan Jackson, managing director at Economists.com, told the Legislature on Tuesday that the current water and wastewater rates have been in place for too long.

CUC has not implemented any significant increase to the rates in almost 15 years. "I don't know of any

See WATER on Page 4

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Local

Sablan calls for formal hiring procedure at LB

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

A lawmaker has called for a legitimate process for selecting a director for the Legislative Bureau.

Rep. Tina Sablan said the Senate and the House of Representatives would not be fighting over who should be the next director if there were required qualifications and a formal evaluation of candidates.

Sablan

"This year, the position was not even announced. Four applicants expressed interest, but the Senate apparently did not even know that. I have no idea if formal interviews were conducted, or if resumes were even submitted," Sablan said.

She agreed with Sen. Maria Pangelinan who in a recent memorandum to the legislators noted that the Legislative Bureau is far more political than it should be, and especially so in the selection of the Legislative Bureau director, which changes every time the leadership changes.

"The Legislative Bureau is likelier to be the nonpartisan, independent body that it was intended to be if there were formal, legitimate processes in place for selecting the Director," Sablan said.

She proposed that the Legislature have the position of director audited, come up with a better position description that includes minimum qualifications, announce the position, and develop a formalized process for selecting and hiring the best candidate for the job.

Much depends on the Legislative Bureau director, she said. She cited as examples the maintenance of legislative records, quality of professional services provided to legislators, maintenance of office grounds, capital equipment, supplies, and vehicles, proper procurement and inventory management, standard operating procedures for the office, and personnel management policies.

"We should not take this position lightly, and the recent deadlock between the houses has presented us with an opportunity to improve, formalize, and legitimize the way the director is selected, and thereby improve the services of the Legislative Bureau in the long run," Sablan said.

The Senate wants LB deputy director Glenna SP Reyes to replace Omar, saying she has the hands-on experience and is already doing much of the work administering the legislative bureau.

The House leadership says the Senate's decision is tainted by nepotism. Reyes is the wife of Senate President Pete P. Reyes. The Republican-dominated House has picked Ed Tenorio, a Cabinet member in the Babauta administration, for the job.

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Competition for the 9 to 13 years old category
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FEB. 22, 2008 – FRIDAY FOOD FAIR
6PM Lobby of Saipan Grand Hotel
SHOWDOWN of the Top 3 winners of the two categories
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Lower power rates before term's end

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial says he will reduce the power rates before he steps down next year.

Asked about his plans for a possible re-election, the governor said he is not thinking of politics, as his main goal is to end the power crisis and lower the cost of electric service to the customers.

"Before the end of my term, I will reduce the cost of power to the people," said the governor, who won the 2005 election partly on a promise that he would scrap the fuel surcharge implemented by the Babauta administration.

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. did stop collecting the surcharge of 3.5 cents per kWh. However, it implemented a new power rate structure that nearly doubled the cost of electricity in the Commonwealth.

Fitial did not say how he plans to reduce the power rates. But alternative energy seems to be part of the governor's strategy. He recently hired Dr. James E. Quick, a volcano expert that previously worked at U.S. Geological Survey, to study the feasibility of geothermal power for the Commonwealth. Next week, Fitial will meet with Quick in Dallas to approve a request for proposals for a geothermal power plant in one of the islands north of Saipan.

The local utility is currently under a state of emergency because it cannot afford to pay for fuel and repair its rundown power generators.

The cost of fuel has quadrupled in a little over four years—from $25 per barrel in September 2003, to over $120 per barrel last week.

The state of emergency declaration allows the governor to assume full control of CUC and suspend all regulatory statute provisions and regulations applicable to CUC, including procurement regulations. The governor will also have the power to reprogram all available funds to address CUC's problems.

Charter bill for Tinian vetoed

Acting Gov. Timothy P. Villagomez has vetoed a bill creating a charter for Tinian.

Villagomez said the Tinian local bill was unnecessary, and the findings section of the legislation admitted as much when it cited a 2003 ruling by the CNMI Supreme Court.

According to the Supreme Court, Tinian is a chartered municipality and the Commonwealth need not take further steps in that regard.

Villagomez also said the Tinian and Aguiguan Legislative Delegation was not authorized to enact a charter.

"If this legislation was necessary, it should have been introduced by the CNMI Legislature, not the local delegation," he said.

The bill did not cite any specific reason the delegation wanted to enact the charter except that, "it is the desire of the Municipality of Tinian and Aguiguan to have a separate formal charter consistent with Commonwealth Constitution."

A charter is a document that sets forth the principles, functions, and organization of a government, corporate body, or other group. ***(Agnes E. Donato)***

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Mathis quits as CUC spokesperson

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Pamela Mathis has quit as spokesperson for the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.—a position that she has held for 15 years—to go back to the U.S. mainland.

Mathis' resignation will take effect today. She will move to Arizona the following week to start work as spokesperson for the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management.

"The purpose of me going is to be closer to my elderly mother, who is in Idaho, after my father died a year ago," she said.

There has been no formal announcement on Mathis' replacement.

Mathis said she feels "strange" about leaving Saipan. "I say strange because after 18 years this has become my home. It is my home. I love my family members…I mean my extended family of Chamorro, Carolinian and Palauan families that have adopted me," she said.

Mathis said she will miss her church, the Immanuel Methodist Church, and the wonderful people that she got to know.

"So it's a bittersweet journey. It's very nice to have such a good job to go to," she said.

The CUC spokesperson said she feels she has stood firm to the mission of getting information to the customers and staying true to spirit of an open government.

Mathis came to Saipan in 1990 when she worked as reporter/anchor of the former Saipan Cable TV. The following year, she joined then Gov. Larry Guerrero as deputy press secretary, then as acting press secretary.

In 1993, she entered CUC as information officer or spokesperson, the post that she held until today, making her the longest to serve as public information officer in the CNMI.

As CUC spokesperson for 15 years, Mathis worked under five governors, starting from Larry Guerrero up to Gov. Benigno Fitial, and five CUC executive directors.

In the early 1990s, she founded the Society of Professional Journalists chapter in the CNMI where she served two terms.

To her critics, Mathis said she believes people have a right to their own opinion. "It's just that I have the right to tell them, they're dead wrong," she pointed out.

Mathis

Volcanic haze spreads to Rota

The government maintained its public health alert for Tinian and Saipan due to the volcanic haze from Anatahan, even as the haze spread to Rota.

Although the smell of sulfur was not as bad as on Wednesday on Tinian and Saipan, the haze and sulfur odor were still persistent on the two islands.

The Emergency Management Office said the Rota Mayor's Office reported that the island also experienced hazy conditions yesterday, but not the sulfurous odor.

No private and public schools were closed.

EMO said that that based on reports from the U.S. Geological Survey and National Weather Service in Guam, the northerly wind flow patterns were still bringing some of the gases from Anatahan volcano to Tinian and Saipan.

EMO said the wind slightly shifted to the east, but haze and sulfur odor were still around Tinian, Saipan, and Rota.

EMO said the satellite and Ozone Monitoring Instrument images shows light to variable plume at Anatahan extending southsouthwest toward Saipan and Tinian and to the west of Rota.

As of 4:45pm yesterday, EMO said its SO2 analyzer reading indicated 74ppb (parts per billions).

"Concentrations of volcanic gases should be low…but the haze and odor may bother people with respiratory problems. People who experience breathing problems should remain indoors," the agency said.

Anatahan volcano has been spewing out gas and steam since its eruption in May 2003. ***(Ferdie dela Torre)***

Copper wire thieves strike again at CUC water station

Copper wire thieves struck again yesterday at the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s water treatment station in Koblerville, triggering water outages in some areas in As Lito.

CUC spokesperson Pamela Mathis told *Saipan Tribune* that the thieves disabled the water treatment by stealing about 300 feet of copper wires.

"It caused us to turn off three water wells and that caused the water outage in As Lito," Mathis said.

She said the water outage affected approximately 58 customers. "We are very saddened and upset," she said.

Mathis said personnel from the Department of Public Safety and Division of Environmental Quality responded to the area to conduct an investigation and inspection.

As of yesterday, no arrest had been made yet.

On Sept. 1, 2007, copper wire thieves struck at CUC's major water system in Isley Field, causing many areas the following day having no water supply.

Thieves reportedly stole copper wires from the water system where the utility agency gather and treat water then release it through a booster pump system.

As a result people in Dandan, Isley, Airport Road area, and As Lito had no water supply. ***(Ferdie dela Torre)***

FISHERMAN

From Page 1

showed that Raqueto had gone to the Coral Ocean Point cliff line at 9am to fish.

Raqueto's fishing line, however, broke as he was reeling in his catch.

Ogumoro said that witnesses saw the victim attempting to retrieve his catch by climbing down the rocks and diving into the ocean.

A call made to DPS at 9:46am said that a fisherman fell off the cliff line near Coral Ocean Point.

Personnel from the DPS' Boating Safety, Dive Rescue Team and DPS's Fire Division's Search and Rescue Unit and Patrol Units responded to the scene.

The rescuers later found Raqueto and transported him to CHC where a doctor pronounced him dead.

"This case is still under investigation," Ogumoro said.

Last Jan. 21, a man and his companion were swept out to sea by a big wave while they were crab hunting at the cliff line of Marine Beach in Kagman. The man's body was never found, but his companion managed to swim back to the cliff line.

In March 2007, four Korean students drowned at Forbidden Island when a big wave struck at them while they were hiking on the cliff line.

WATER

From Page 1

utility that has gone that long without an increase. Other utilities raise their rates just to keep up with the inflation," said Jackson, who has been working on the CUC water and wastewater study since 2006.

According to Jackson, the average water and wastewater utility throughout the world increases rates by 5 to 6 percent a year, in order to cope with inflation and pay for repair and maintenance.

In the Commonwealth, additional pressures are present. Water supply and quality, health issues, and the skyrocketing fuel prices all have a financial implication for CUC, he said.

He added that the local rates are too low compared to the United States. In the CNMI, a customer who consumes 10,000 gallons in a month pays about $30. In the United States, the same amount of usage pays $65.

"That is less than half the U.S. average. And the cost of providing service here is even higher," Jackson said.

In deciding whether to raise water and wastewater rates, the CNMI should first determine what its goal is as a community, he said.

"Do you just want to be able to cover the costs? Do you want to fund capital improvement and improve the quality of water? Or do you want to reduce and eliminate the need for government subsidy? These questions, which you have to answer as a community, will determine the ultimate rate structure," Jackson said.

He noted, however, that unlike with power, there is no urgent need to raise water and wastewater rates. This allows the CNMI a fair amount of flexibility in setting new rates. In order words, CUC can phase-in the increase over a number of years, instead of imposing a huge increase at one time.

"Customers realize that costs will eventually increase. A gradual hike may be more acceptable to them," he said.

PRICES

From Page 1

the Department of Commerce, the consumer price index for the period of October and December 2007 climbed to 114.1 compared to the 111.7 recorded in the same period in 2006.

This means that a market basket of goods and services that cost $100 during the 2003 base period cost $114.1 in the final three months of last year.

The rise in the consumer price index was led by 5.0 rise in food from 102.3 in the fourth quarter of 2006 to 107.4 in the fourth quarter of last year.

Alcoholic beverages also increased by 4.3 to 104.3 in the final three months of last year from 100.0 in October-December 2006.

Housing and utilities, already high to begin with, incurred an increase of 3.1 last quarter to 144.9, compared to the fourth quarter 2006 figure of 140.5. Apparel also had to cope with a 2.0 rise last quarter to 102.3 from the 100.3 reported in the fourth quarter of 2006.

Medical care and recreation also took a hit in the consumer price index line, as they increased by 1.1 and 1.9 respectively in the fourth quarter of 2007 to 101.1 and 101 from 100 and 99.1 respectively in the final three months of 2006.

Education and communication, meanwhile, posted a slight increase of 0.1 from 100.5 to 100.6 bridging the fourth quarter of 2006 and the fourth quarter of 2007.

Higher fuel and shipping costs are to blamed for the steady increase in the islands' consumer price index.

Only two categories didn't show any increase—transportation and other good and services. They remained stable at an index of 100 apiece.

Q4 DOWN

From Page 1

meanwhile, had a monumental drop in 2007 as the public sector spent 16.8 percent less last year—down to $162.7 million from the $195.6 million in 2006.

The decline is the lowest in five years, as government expenditures totaled $213.9 million in 2003 and increased by 0.7 percent the next year to $215.4 million. It was a whopping $224.1 million in 2005—a 4.04 percent rise—before crashing back to $195.6 million, which is a 12.7-percent decrease.

The drop in government revenues was partly brought about by the 15.10-percent drop in taxes and fees collected by the government, as the local garment industry continued its decline in 2007.

General fund revenue was down to $163.03 million last year, which is the lowest in years. Taxes and fees collected were $209.7 million in 2003, $217.9 million in 2004, $210.29 million in 2005, and $192.3 million in 2006.

Imports and exports also experienced historic lows last year. Imports dropped 18.6 percent to $439.4 million in 2007, compared to $540.2 million in 2006.

The sector was a robust $682.5 million in 2003, $666.4 million 2004, and was still in the $600-million level in 2005 at $605.5 million.

With four more garment factories closing shop last year, exports continued its sharp decline in 2007, falling by an astronomical 36 percent to $307.5 million.

Exports were more than double that in 2003 at $792.1 million, $826 million in 2004, and $650.8 million in 2005.

Even building permits, a good indicator of activity in the construction industry, was not spared as it showed a 12-percent drop in 2007 to 255 permits issued out, compared to the 292 permits in 2006.

The islands' tourism, banking, remittance, hotel occupancy, and vehicle sold were earlier reported by the *Saipan Tribune*.

Total deposits were up 1 percent to $2.08 million from $2.06 a year ago, while loans were down 8 percent to $674,290 from $734,800 in 2006.

Remittances decreased by 8.4 percent to $93.6 million compared to $102.2 million a year ago. Auto sales—new and used—dropped 18 percent to 1,101 units sold, compared to 1,352 units sold in 2006.

Visitor arrivals dropped 10.6 percent to 389,261 tourists in 2007, down from the 435,494 visitor arrival recorded in 2006.

The CNMI hotel daily rate, meanwhile, inched up to $92.125 last year from $90 in 2006. In contrast, hotel occupancy fell to 58.9 percent last year from 62 percent in 2006.

'Counterfeit money not a big issue in NMI'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

A flier on how to detect counterfeit U.S. currency is displayed while participants listen to a presentation by the United States Secret Service on how to protect yourself from Counterfeit Transactions and Identity Theft at the Saipan Grand Hotel Thursday. The event was sponsored by G4S Security Services "Marianas" and Saipan Grand Hotel.

Fortunately for the CNMI, counterfeit U.S. currency is not a big problem on the islands, according to a visiting U.S. Secret Service agent.

Special agent/criminal investigator Virgil D. "Gus" Reichle Jr. said in an interview yesterday that they do see some counterfeits coming to Saipan as well as Guam, "but nothing alarming."

Typically, the special agent said, what they're seeing are counterfeit $100 bills being passed here on Saipan.

When asked about the place of origin of these fake money, Reichle said he doesn't release that information.

The special agent, who is based in Guam, conducted yesterday a presentation on identity theft and counterfeit money detection at the Saipan Grand Hotel's Seaside Hall.

Law enforcement officers from Customs, Department of Public Safety and personnel from Bank Pacific, Chamber of Commerce, and other agencies attended the four-hour seminar.

G4S Security Services and Saipan Grand Hotel coordinated the seminar.

Reichle said it is an outreach program for them to talk to people in the business community about fraud detection.

"Today specifically we did a one-hour session on detection of counterfeit U.S. currency and also phase two of that was a presentation pursuant to identity theft and how it relates to credit card fraud and check fraud," he said.

The U.S. Secret Service's forte is counterfeit U.S. currency/check fraud, credit card fraud, wire fraud, mail fraud, bank fraud, and financial crimes.

He said that, at the seminar he dedicated much time talking about digital counterfeit produced with modern computer systems as well as fake money that is manufactured by photography.

The special agent said he taught participants how to differentiate between genuine money from counterfeits.

"I am pleased with the turnout. We provide this training free of charge. And the fact that they are here I am happy because whether or not they've actually had personal experiences with taking counterfeit…I am thankful that they are here," he said.

Reichle said likes to see the money handlers or the managers at the seminar.

"If I can train the manager… he can [pass] that wisdom and information to his employees," he said.

On the credit card fraud, Reichle said he doesn't have much information on the extent of fraudulent use of credit cards in the CNMI.

"We had a pretty good case that was referred to us by Guam Customs a few years ago," he said.

Reichle's advice to the people of CNMI: Just be aware of "the monies that you take in your daily routine."

"What we really try to do here is try to drive home the fact that if in fact you do receive a counterfeit bill try to be a good witness for me. Ultimately we are on the same boat. If they can provide me some sort of assistance with regards to the responsible party for passing the counterfeit, that would make prosecution and detection that's much easier for law enforcement," he said.

The special agent encouraged anyone who encounters fake money to call the Department of Public Safety or contact him in Guam.

"One thing that I would suggest to people is, when you are at a cash register and you are dealing with cash transaction, count how much your change you had from your purchase," he said.

When looking at the change, Reichle said, people should make sure to check if they're not getting counterfeit as a result of the change.

"Be a good consumer. Do those two things because once you walk away from that transaction and you are out in the parking lot or you are at home and later on you detected that the teller passed you a counterfeit as a result of change, that's too late. Now it is a matter of 'he said, she said.' Now you've got to be able to establish the fact that 'yes in fact they did give me this counterfeit.'" he added.

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Taisakan to DPL: Prioritize Pagan projects

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
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REPORTER

Northern Islands Mayor Valentin I. Taisakan wants the Department of Public Lands to prioritize two projects on the island of Pagan: the mining of pozzolan and the marketing of lava rocks.

The mining of pozzolan, according to Taisakan, is a project that can help jump start economic development and investment in the Northern Islands.

"Definitely, it will help promote and support reliable sea and air transportation and communication services. And jobs will be created for the island's residents and others," Taisakan said.

By having reliable sea and air transportation and communication services, Taisakan said, "this will help promote other business interest and developments, such as adventure tour, filming, diving, farming, fishing, and others in these islands."

Last year, the Department of Public Lands posted on its website a two-part report on Pagan. DPL Secretary John M. Del Rosario said this was intended to stir the interest of major cement manufacturing companies about Pagan's pozzolan.

Along with the pozzolan, the Northern Islands is requesting DPL to also look into the marketing of Pagan's lava rocks.

A field survey and study of the airstrip on Pagan conducted by the EFC Engineers & Architects found that large deposit of lava rocks, which covered about half the area of the airstrip, "is a product that can be used an non-skid material for road pavement, airport runways, and similar projects," Taisakan said.

The lava rocks, he added, is ideal for the manufacturing of cement bricks and blocks that produces "beautiful natural color of the lava rock."

"Because of the abundance of these volcanic products, they probably will and still can attract serious investors to mine them; and that will definitely bring fresh revenue and resources needed to support our government operations," Taisakan said.

A mining expert hired by DPL had said that Pagan only had 12 million metric tons of pozzolan available.

Then Division of Public Lands issued a permit to JG Sablan in September 1995 to mine pozzolan and basalt on Pagan for a term of 20 years.

In May 2003, DPL issued a notice to JG Sablan informing it that its permit was being terminated.

JG Sablan filed a petition for judicial review in the Superior Court. The company asked the court to review DPL's revocation of the permit.

Last October, the Superior Court ruled that DPL afforded JG Sablan sufficient due process before revoking the company's permit to mine pozzolan and basalt on Pagan.

Associate Judge David A. Wiseman said the procedures followed by DPL in revoking JG Sablan's permit minimally fulfilled those procedural requirements mandated by a provision of the CNMI Administrative Procedure Act.

EMO warns of high surf conditions

The Emergency Management Office is warning the public to stay out of the water in the next few days due to high surf conditions that could be life threatening.

EMO is strongly advising the public—especially fishermen, tour operators, divers and swimmers—to avoid venturing into exposed beaches, especially along north facing reefs, where rip currents will be life-threatening.

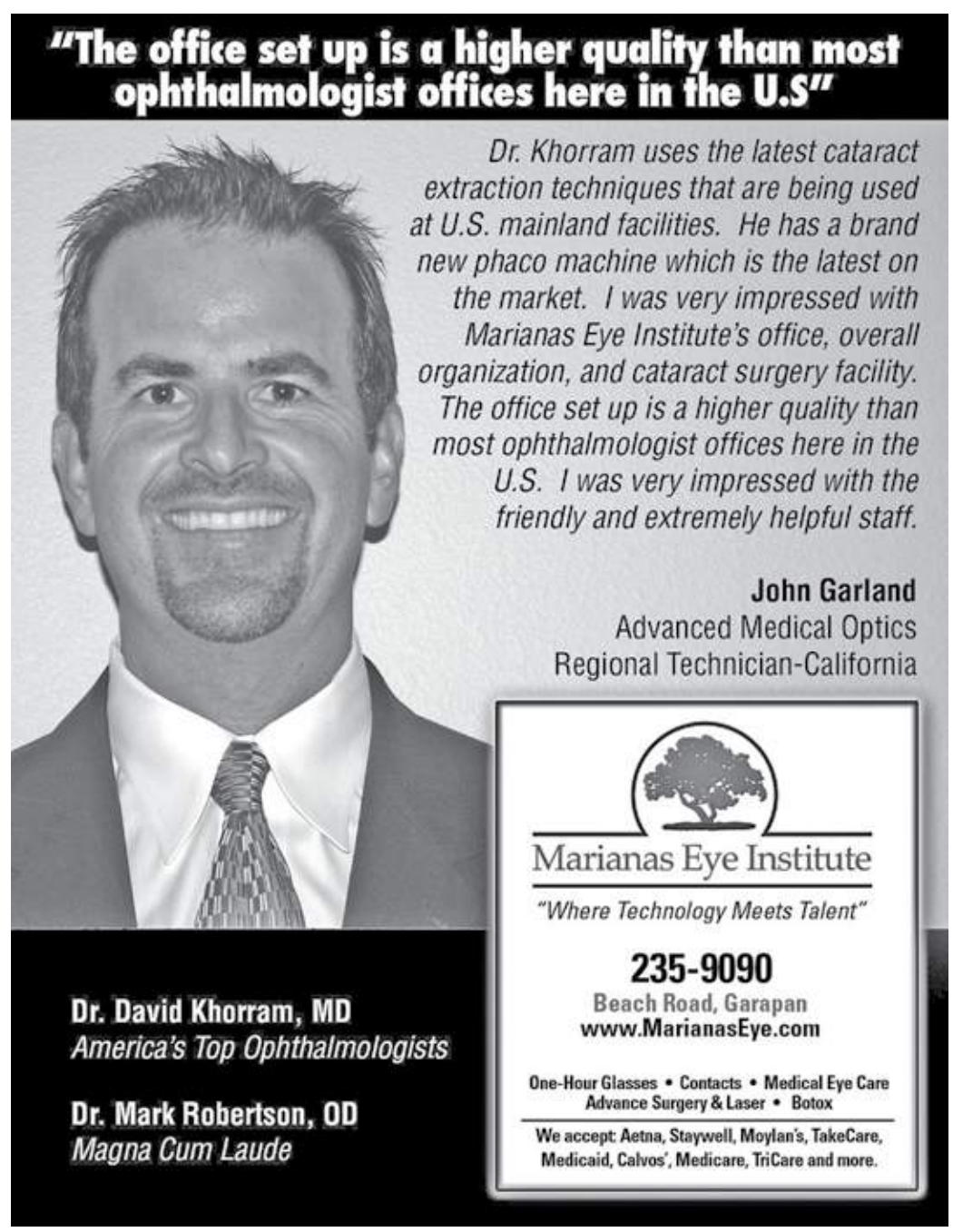
EMO has issued a warning of high surf that is projected to last until Sunday.

In an advisory issued yesterday, it said a north swell generated by strong winds east of Japan will bring hazardous surf to north facing exposures of the Mariana islands for the next few days. This was based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Tiyan Guam.

A high surf advisory means, hazardous surf is occurring along with dangerous rip currents. Hazardous surf of 7 to 9 feet was projected along north facing reefs yesterday. It is expected to increase to 8 to 10 feet today.

On Rota, high surf is expected at Teteto beach, facing north. On Saipan, high surf is projected for Achugau Beach. ***(EMO)***

SAIPAN VISITORS
Dennis and Jackie Bognot would like to welcome their family who is on island for a vacation. Photo shows the Bognot family posing at the Bird Island Lookout. From left, Jackie, son Gio, Fe, Dennis, and Mommy Erlin.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO


"The office set up is a higher quality than most ophthalmologist offices here in the U.S"
Dr. Khorram uses the latest cataract extraction techniques that are being used at U.S. mainland facilities. He has a brand new phaco machine which is the latest on the market. I was very impressed with Marianas Eye Institute's office, overall organization, and cataract surgery facility. The office set up is a higher quality than most ophthalmologist offices here in the U.S. I was very impressed with the friendly and extremely helpful staff.
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DCCA appeals for more LIHEAP funding

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
rianne_pangelinan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Department of Community & Cultural Affairs is seeking travel funds that the department says is necessary to travel to Rota and Tinian to meet with residents about issues related to the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

"Travel to Rota and Tinian are vitally important to the program to conduct client follow-ups, program and record audits for conformity and compliance purposes, and public hearings, as required," DCCA deputy secretary Melvin L.O. Faisao told the Legislature.

The LIHEAP program helps low-income families, the disabled, and elderly subsidize their power utilities. One of LIHEAP's requirements is for every client to bring their account current or they will lose their eligibility.

There are approximately 500 households in the CNMI that are recipients of the program. This is about a 50 percent drop from the former number of people that the program was servicing, according to Faisao.

"The emergency regulation implemented in FY 2006 reduced the benefit of all LIHEAP recipients to 50 percent," said Faisao.

With the lower amount of benefits, LIHEAP clients "ended up getting disconnected as they cannot afford to pay their share and our recipients also declined to 50 percent since they were forced to get out of the program," Faisao said.

This, he said, resulted in LIHEAP clients being burdened more by the current power rates of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.

"Our suggestion is to bring back the old matrix system or make a new regulation to coincide with the present rate of CUC," Faisao said.

DCCA is asking the CNMI lawmakers for a review of its budget and additional funding.

The department is appealing to the Legislature not to cut its budget and to take into consideration the impact any budget cuts it may sustain on the many clients being served by DCCA.

"It is the intent of this department to share proposals that may help prevent social and economic hardship to our programs and the communities that are stake holders to the services from DCAA," Faisao said.

SaipanCell launches the first Blackberry phone on Saipan

SaipanCell Communications and Research In Motion, a global leader in wireless innovation, launched yesterday the BlackBerry solution for the first time on a CDMA network in Saipan.

SaipanCell's network provides BlackBerry smartphone customers with widely available coverage on the island and in areas of the CNMI.

SaipanCell's initial offering includes BlackBerry Enterprise Server, BlackBerry Internet Service and the BlackBerry 8830 World Edition smartphone in Saipan. With the BlackBerry solution on SaipanCell's CDMA network, SaipanCell's customers will now be able to benefit from wireless access to email, phone, Internet, text messaging, organizer and corporate data applications from a single handset with advanced security features and exceptional ease-of-use.

According to president and CEO Mark Chamberlin, "The BlackBerry platform is a world-class solution that has been adopted by millions of mobile professionals around the world and the BlackBerry 8830 World Edition smartphone delivers high value in terms of communications, productivity and flexibility. We are pleased to be working with RIM to launch this world-renowned product in Saipan and we are confident that our network and value-oriented approach will deliver a superior offer to our customers."

Norm Lo, RIM vice president, Asia-Pacific, said, "RIM is very pleased to be working with GuamCell and SaipanCell to further drive the adoption of the BlackBerry solution on Guam and Saipan.

The BlackBerry 8830 is and full-featured and stylish handset and it is the first BlackBerry smartphone that supports both CDMA and GPRS connectivity, allowing customers to take advantage of SaipanCell's roaming services while traveling outside the country."

The BlackBerry 8830 from SaipanCell includes:

■ Support for dual-band 800/1900 MHz CDMA2000® 1X Ev-DO networks and dual-band 900/1800 MHz GSM/GPRS networks.

■ Built-in GPS (Global Positioning System) to support location-based applications and services.

■ Stereo headset jack and media player, able to play MP3 and AAC music files and MPEG4 and H.263 video files.

■ Large, high resolution (320 x 240), ultra-bright landscape display, highly tactile keyboard and intuitive trackball navigation provides an exceptional user experience.

■ Innovative light-sensing technology that automatically optimizes the display and keyboard lighting for indoor, outdoor and dark environments.

■ High performance HTML browser for accessing web sites while on the go.

■ Support for polyphonic, MP3 and MIDI ring tones that can be assigned to different contacts.

■ A removable, rechargeable, high-capacity battery.

Premium phone features including noise cancellation for enhanced audio performance, speaker independent voice recognition for voice activated dialing, 'send', 'end', and 'mute' keys, low-distortion speakerphone and Bluetooth® to support hands-free accessories. ***(SaipanCell)***

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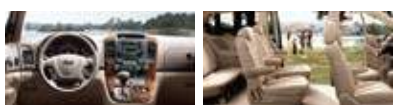

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Versa HB	#7L360734	Blue	$15,990.00
Versa S	#7L398849	White	$15,990.00
Sentra	#7L611483	Gray	$16,990.00
Frontier XE	#7C409237	White	$23,390.00
Frontier SE	#7C408903	Silver	$26,990.00
~~Pathfinder~~	~~#6C67468~~ SOLD	~~Granite~~	~~$28,990.00~~

HONDA	STOCK #	COLOR	PRICE
Fit	#7S025556	Mist	$14,995.00
Fit Sport	#7S025501	Blue	$16,495.00
Civic DX	#7L061948	White	$16,995.00
~~CR-V LX~~	~~#7C07359~~ SOLD	~~White~~	~~$22,995.00~~
Ridgeline	#7H505732	Silver	$32,990.00

FORD	STOCK #	COLOR	PRICE
Ranger	#7PA31119	White	$16,990.00
Fusion	#7R127180	Pearl	$18,990.00
Escape	#7KB45887	Silver	$19,990.00
F-150	#6NB05745	White	$21,990.00
Sport Trac	#7UA65392	Gold	$26,990.00

KIA	STOCK #	COLOR	PRICE
Rio	#76292370	White	$12,995.00
Rio	#76292373	Gray	$12,995.00
Sportage	#77353763	Silver	$17,695.00
Sorento	#65602982	Green	$18,995.00

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OSHA fines Garapan firm $59.4K

SAN FRANCISCO—The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration has cited Musung Corp. for alleged safety violations at the Ace Plaza commercial building construction site in Garapan, Saipan, and proposed $59,400 in penalties.

OSHA cited the company for an alleged willful violation following a planned inspection at the worksite on Aug. 27, 2007, and assessed a proposed penalty of $42,000 for failing to provide fall protection for employees working on scaffolds 15 feet above the ground. OSHA cited the construction company seven times between 2001 and 2005 for violations of the fall protection standards.

A willful violation is one committed with intentional disregard of, or plain indifference to, the requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

"Musung's safety history and the facts surrounding the current inspection indicate that the employer willfully violated fall protection regulations," said Teresa Harrison, OSHA's acting regional administrator in San Francisco. "These violations had the potential of resulting in the death or serious injury of one or more of the company's employees."

OSHA cited the company for four alleged serious violations and proposed a $4,200 penalty for failing to fully plank scaffold platforms to prevent falls; a $4,200 penalty for failure to provide fall protection training; a $4,200 penalty for failing to provide ladders extending three feet above the upper landing level; and a $4,200 penalty for permitting employees to use ladders while carrying objects or loads that could cause them to lose their balance and fall. A serious violation occurs when there is substantial probability that death or serious physical harm could result from a hazard about which the employer knew or should have known.

OSHA cited Musung Corp. with one other-than-serious violation, assessing a $600 proposed penalty for failing to maintain required employee injury and illness records.

Musung Corp., based in Garapan, has 15 business days from receipt of the citations and proposed penalties to comply with them, to request and participate in an informal conference with OSHA's area director, or to contest the citations before the independent Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission.

OSHA conducted more than 39,000 inspections in fiscal year 2007 and found more than 89,000 violations of its standards and regulations. ***(DOL)***

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Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

February 15, 2000

Repeal of three- year limit eyed

The CNMI Legislature is likely to repeal a public law that requires nonresident workers who have been in the CNMI for three consecutive years to leave the islands for at least six months before they are allowed to return for re-employment. Rep. Diego T. Benavente said both chambers of the 12th Commonwealth Legislature have been vocal about their stand at creating a business-friendly environment in the CNMI to lure more foreign investors into the Northern Marianas.

House moves to create business-friendly environment

In fresh efforts to revitalize the Commonwealth's sluggish economy, the CNMI Legislature has forged an agreement aimed at fast-tracking the passage of legislation considered important to allowing growth in the business sector. House Speaker Ben Fitial said the new system, which will expedite passing of mostly investment-related measures, is expected to facilitate growth and recovery of business activities in the islands.

Recycling is now a law

Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio has signed into law a legislation that seeks to extend the life span of the new landfill in Marpi through intensified promotion of recycling wastes in the Northern Marianas. Called the Commonwealth Recycling Act of 1999, Public Law 11-122 seeks to divert toxic and hazardous materials from the new dumpsite in Marpi.

February 15, 2001

NMI tourism picks up in January

Visitor arrivals to the Northern Marianas climbed 3.92 percent in January to reach 45,613, which shows that the island's distressed tourism industry is slowly waking up from a three-year slumber that started in 1998. Travelers from Japan have persistently positioned themselves as the prime source of revenues for the local tourism industry as the Marianas Visitors Authority disclosed a six-percent improvement on the number of Japanese tourists to the CNMI last month.

House eyes additional funding for GHLIP

The Legislature is looking into a possible appropriation of supplemental budget to help the Group Health Life Insurance Program settle its more than $4 million outstanding debts to hundreds of on- and off-island health providers. According to Committee on Health and Welfare chair Maria Peter, the Legislature is bent at exerting all efforts to provide GHLIP with financial support to end its funding woes with over 295 health providers.

Revenues from garment industry down 3 percent

Revenues generated by the CNMI government from the apparel manufacturing industry fell three percent in 2000 from the previous year, indicating a dramatic slowdown in the volume of orders from mainland buyers. This does not come as a surprise though, since industry players have projected that fewer garment products will be exported by Saipan manufacturers to the mainland United States due to pressures from the Clinton Administration and the billion-dollar class action suit.

February 15, 2002

BB assures workers of civil-service protection

Senate Bill 13-15, which expanded the exempted positions at the Executive Branch in effect, does not necessarily strip civil-service employees of their status since it only converts certain positions into ungraded status. This means that the conversion will apply on the position and not the individual sitting on that post, particularly if that person is already a civil-service employee, according to Sen. Thomas P. Villagomez, the measure's author.

16-foot torpedo unearthed in Marpi

Just when a multitude of vintage explosives were found at the site of the Marpi landfill, the Emergency Management Office discovered some 50 ordnance-including a 16-foot warship torpedo-at a forested area in Marpi, not too far from the vicinity of the government project. Some of the World War II ordnance were already recovered and placed for safekeeping at the EMO's bunker in Marpi, but many of them still remained scattered on the field, located a few hundred yards north of the Last Command Post near Banzai cliff.

FOA stages Broadway fave *The Fantasticks*

By CLARISSA DAVID
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

In keeping with its tradition of staging renowned theatrical productions, Friends of the Arts brings to Saipan for the very first time the world's longest running musical, *The Fantasticks*.

Lyrics written by Tom Jones and music arranged by Harvey Schmidt, *The Fantasticks* is a 1960 musical allegory based on Edmond Rostand's play *The Romancers*. It tells the story of two neighboring fathers who feign a feud and put up a wall between their houses so that their children will fall in love, enabling them to merge their households. The first act shows that everything goes according to plan. In the second act, however, the lovers mature and break up, allowing themselves to search for what the world has to offer, only to return home wiser, sensible, and back in each other's arms.

The show's director, Dr. Susan Fishman-Tudor, asserts how everything fell into place while planning for the production of *The Fantasticks*. "FOA has been doing three major productions every year. This season, we did *The Sisters Rosenweig* and *Scrooge*. Our season doesn't usually end until about May, but we're going to do some reorganization, so we have a short season. It definitely worked out, timing-wise," she explained.

What better time to present a tale about young love other than the love month? The show's first screening was yesterday, Feb. 14, Valentine's Day. Perfect timing indeed.

Yet Dr. Fishman-Tudor admitted that the decision-making wasn't as simple as it seemed. "There were obstacles… We are at war, there are a lot of negative stories in the newspapers, the list goes on. In today's economy, it was courageous, maybe stupid… And most of the hotels feature dinners on Valentine's."

FOA wanted to offer something different for the people on island on the month of February, so they took their chance. "Instead of just high-priced gourmet dinner, we wanted to make it special [by] having dinner theater where you have seven-course gourmet meal. That's really fantastic—no pun intended," she said.

The musical will still be shown at 7pm tonight and Sunday night at Charley's Cabaret, Pacific Islands Club. The performances on these nights include a buffet dinner.

FOA's adaptation of the musical remains faithful to the original classic, keeping the comedic fight scenes, characteristic cardboard moon, and the sprinkling of confetti part of the show, assuring the viewers of an enjoyable experience.

Sam Conner, who plays the part of Matt, knew of this musical from way back and sang a song from the play during the audition. Performing the role of Luisa is Joan Ashley Liwanag, whose rich, singing voice belies her petite frame. Leo Goode, Jr., noted for his performance in last year's *Scrooge*, will deliver once again, this time as the baritone bandit, El Gallo.

Completing the cast are regular performers: Paul Dujua (Bellomy), Chuck Sayon (The Old Actor), Tommy Baik (Mortimer), Joseph Lloyd (The Mute), and Harold Easton (Hucklebee).

Fishman-Tudor takes pride in this production, which was aided by different groups. "We practice at MHS Studio. The theater club helped us build the bamboo prop/set. MHS art department did the banner. It's a community project."

FOA has, without fail, constantly made use of their stage productions as an opportunity to help the community. They donate a percentage of their earnings to their chosen organization. These organizations included Karidat, Crime Stoppers, and Guma Esperansa. For *The Fantasticks* they selected a beneficiary that has relevance to the musical.

"KRNM is having a difficult time… and they play theatrical, classical types of music. *The Fantasticks* comes from classical theater. It was an old French comedy," Fishman-Tudor explained.

The plot may be simple, the cast kept to a minimum, and the backdrop unfussy, but other elements will keep the people interested in this delightful musical. The catchy tones and the outstanding interpretation of the actors are only a few. "[It's] a warm, lighthearted [play] dealing with true emotions, human desires and expectations, disappointments and successes," the director said.

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Samuel C. Lo, O.D., M.D.

Dr. Lo received his ophthalmology training at the world renowned New York Eye and Ear Infirmary and followed by a retina fellowship at the Mt. Sinai Medical Center in New York. He specializes in the treatment of retinal disease including Diabetic eye disease, Macular degeneration, Retinal detachment, Cataract and Glaucoma. Dr. Lo returns to Saipan to offer "**Advanced Eye Care**" to the people of Saipan.

Dr. Lo will be in Saipan beginning February 18, 2008 for one week. Medicare, Medicaid and most insurance are accepted.

Appointments can be made by calling Hardt Eye Clinic (670) 235-2030, the Laser and Eye Surgery Center (808) 949-2000 or by email at drsamuello@yahoo.com.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XVIII, Issue No. 46

Published daily at 2/F CIC Centre,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
Mark Rabago ASSISTANT EDITOR

MEMBER
The Associated Press Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

A crisis foretold

In the past few days, warnings about two critical threats from Pakistan have been sounded repeatedly in Washington. First, al-Qaida is rapidly growing stronger in the de facto sanctuary it enjoys in Pakistan's northwestern tribal areas, and is close to acquiring the capability to launch new attacks on the United States. Second, reputable polls show that Pakistanis will vote overwhelmingly against President Pervez Musharraf in parliamentary elections Monday—but the government plans to rig the balloting to prevent that outcome, at the risk of triggering massive protests and violence.

In short, thanks to Mr. Musharraf, the danger of another Sept. 11 is real, as is a violent and destabilizing confrontation between Pakistan's army and the moderate democratic forces that ought to be joining it in the fight against al-Qaida. Yet the Bush administration continues to publicly insist that Mr. Musharraf is "indispensable" to Pakistan—a stubborn and illogical position that is serving only to heighten the twin dangers.

The administration itself is reporting the Pakistani threat against the U.S. homeland. Director of National Intelligence Mike McConnell testified to Congress last week that al-Qaida was acquiring "the last key aspect of its ability to attack the U.S.," by bringing Western recruits to its Pakistani bases for training. It has been reported that Mr. McConnell and CIA Director Michael V. Hayden traveled to Pakistan last month to propose that U.S. intelligence and military personnel join Pakistanis in operations against al-Qaida—only to be rebuffed by Mr. Musharraf.

Similarly, appeals by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice for Mr. Musharraf to permit fair elections have been ineffective. The former general has neither released the judges he imprisoned last fall nor removed controls that prevent media from fully reporting on the elections. Functionaries of the political party he sponsors continue to predict that it will finish first in the parliamentary vote—a forecast that differs starkly, and ominously, from a poll released this week by the International Republican Institute. That poll showed only 14 percent support for Mr. Musharraf's party, compared with 50 percent for the People's Party of assassinated former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher recently acknowledged at a congressional hearing that the administration does not expect fair elections, only "as fair an election as possible." Asked what the United States would do if a fraudulent result provoked violence and destabilization, he responded, "I don't think I'm able to give you a clear answer right now as to what exactly we would do." He did, however, offer a clear answer about whether he regarded Mr. Musharraf as "indispensable": "I do, sir."

Perhaps Mr. Musharraf will reverse himself, limit manipulation of the balloting and accept defeat. Yet by its own account, the Bush administration is unprepared to cope with the imminent danger of destabilization in a country that holds nuclear weapons as well as terrorist training camps. That will remain the case as long as it insists on allegiance to Mr. Musharraf as the starting point of its policy.

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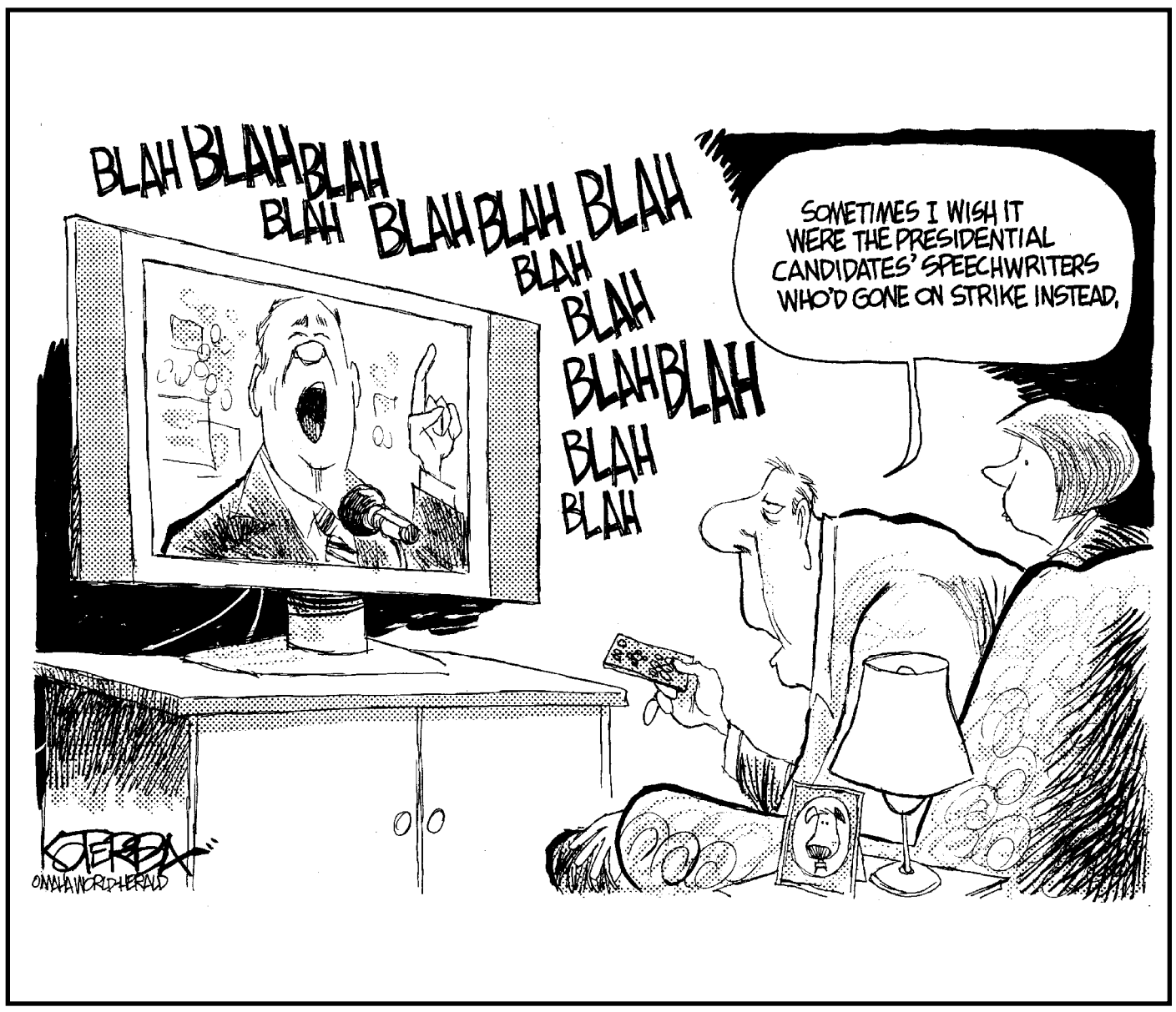

BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH
SOMETIMES I WISH IT WERE THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES' SPEECHWRITERS WHO'D GONE ON STRIKE INSTEAD,
KIERSTEAD
ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

The many faces of Article XII

By JOSEPH JAMES NORITA CAMACHO
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joseph James Norita Camacho is the Floor Leader of the 16th House of Representatives.

"Racist," "greedy," and "un-American" are just a few labels tossed around when people talk about Article XII. Article XII of the CNMI Constitution limits land ownership to persons of Northern Marianas Descent, or NMD. NMDs are persons born or domiciled in 1950 in the Northern Marianas and a citizen of the Trust Territory. Descendants of NMDs are (1) United States citizens and at least 25 percent NMD; or (2) a child under the age of 18 years old who is adopted by a NMD.

Since Article XII is such a broad topic, it is necessary to narrow the topic to "What should be done about Article XII?"

Status quo or abolish land restriction

If you talk to a person long enough about Article XII they generally fall into these groups. At one end of the spectrum are the people who want to keep the status quo with Article XII. At the other end of the spectrum are the people who want to abolish Article XII. Both these extremes have legitimate reasons for the position they take.

Extend the term of lease

There are also people who are somewhere in the middle. There are people, let's call them Group A, who want to amend Article XII. In particular, Group A people want to extend the 55-year limit a non-NMD can lease land—for example up to 75 or 99 years. The idea is to accommodate a business and commercial need to recoup a business investment, and at the same time still keep land ownership in the hands of NMDs.

Amend year defining NMDs; reduce blood quantum; long term residents

There is also a Group B. Group B people want to (1) amend the 1950 date defining NMDs to—for example 1986; or (2) amend Article XII to accommodate persons that have lived in the CNMI for more than 15 or 20 years; or (3) lower the blood quantum to allow less than 25 percent NMDs to own land. The idea is to accommodate individuals and families that have made the CNMI their home yet are not able to own land.

Free trade zone to allow non-NMDs to own land

There is also a Group C. Group C people want a free trade zone in that anybody can buy and sell land. For example, Garapan or Chalan Kanoa, or one of the Northern Islands would be designated as a Free Trade Zone and anybody can own land. The idea is to accommodate a business and commercial need to be flexible yet leaving the remainder of the island(s) under the umbrella of Article XII.

Land owner decide if Article XII apply; private land/public land

Group D people's focus tend to be: (1) The land owner should decide whether Article XII should apply to his or her land, which may apply forever or until the next landowner decide otherwise; or (2) Restriction to land ownership should only apply to private land and not public land, or vice versa.

"May" vote on land issues in 2011

I would be remiss if I did not mention Group E. Group E people focus on the wording in Section 805 of the Covenant which states that after 25 years of the termination of the trust territory agreement (which is the year 2011), the issue of land ownership "MAY" be revisited. Group E people argue that it is unfair to the future generation to change the rules in the middle of the game. Group E people argue that the existing 55 year leases should be allowed to expire before Article XII can be amended—in other words, it would be for that future generation to decide how best to deal with Article XII.

There are perhaps many more degrees and variations or combinations limited only by the preference and imagination of people. The answers to the issue of what should be done about land ownership can be elusive, but it is my sincerest hope that these short notes, in whatever small and humble way, adds to the quality of discussion of land ownership in the CNMI.

Please visit www.camachocnmi.com to vote on a survey on land ownership and post your comments, as well as view and comment on Legislative Bills being considered by the House of Representatives.

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, CIC Centre, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Domo arigato, Mr. Roboto

By ED STEPHENS
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Ed's column runs every Friday. Visit him at SaipanBlog.com and TropicalEd.com.

Vacationing lovers on Micro Beach generally come in matching shades of sunburn. You know the look: It runs from light pink on the first day in paradise, to searing tomato red by the third day. The day may arrive, however, when only one lover per couple has that painful glow on the flesh. The other won't have a glow at all.

Or flesh.

Yes, welcome to the age of the sexbot, or at least the concept of it, and it won't surprise you that Japan, a nation gaga for robots, features prominently in this gig. Instead of shopping for extra sunscreen in Saipan's sari-sari stores, tourists might someday be buying spare capacitors for their mates.

This is really just a new installment of the same old, futuristic twist on the same old, futuristic story. The latest serving comes courtesy of a Feb. 12 AFP news service report, "Hardwired for love: Are robots the sex partners of the future?" Ah ha, so that's what those guys have been working on up there in Tokyo! I'll link that story at SaipanBlog.com. But I think from the title you can catch the gist of the piece.

It's not a new idea. A 1972 novel, The Stepford Wives, is rooted in the same general concept. I suppose there is a large difference between a mere humanoid bedroom appliance, and a full-fledged spousal replacement, and I'm sure somebody will write a Ph.D. thesis on that topic eventually. Life really is funny.

But let me question the basic premise first. I mean, has anybody considered that humans are just as robot-like as robots? Or, heck, even more so? After all, humans are far more easily programmed.

I can lump 95 percent of the world's population into about four distinct categories, which behave with consummate predictability. They're every bit, or more, predictable than Microsoft Windows XP on an unstable day. That's why communications and "education" are such important industries: they program people.

Indeed, opinions and emotions, skillfully crafted and manipulated, are the software that runs the great human mob. Doing this professionally is not complicated, or even particularly difficult.

Having dabbled in computer programming when I was younger (FORTRAN, APL, IITRAN), I can tell you that it's far harder to code a computer's behavior than to shape a human's. Sure, programming, and Artificial Intelligence, have come a long way, but to turn a robot into a quasi-human still strikes me as going against the grain. It seems to me that they are rounding the edges of a digital square, and calling it progress, when the analog wheel, which is to say the manipulation of mob psychology, is already perfected and available for use. People are far more obedient and predictable than my computers are.

Anyway, let's suspend such cynicism for now, so we can accept the robot premise and continue with our conjectures.

We sure can't deny the economies of scale here. If, some decade, some group of geniuses invents not only the robot hardware, but the robot software, to create effective human replacements, then the development costs can be readily amortized over millions of units. Which is to say: There is surely a fortune to be made here.

And if that day comes, our tourists won't even have to bring their robo-mates along. They can just bring the program chip along, like a sim card for a cell phone. Vacationers will rent a robot in Garapan, install the chip, and, presto, all their settings and preferences will be installed on the new unit when it boots up.

I can just hear a Saipan Rent-a-Robot employee talking now, assisting a tourist down from Tokyo...

"Mrs. Watanabe, would you like to upgrade to the Fabio 4.2 version? It's complimentary with a three-day rental."

"I've been using 4.1 so far, it works pretty well, what's the difference?"

"Well, ma'am, 4.2 has a refined humor algorithm in the dialog module, and it fixes a few bugs in the skin thermostat."

"Any difference in the love mode?"

"Yes ma'am, some. Five new options in the sub-menus, but they are just minor variations of the main menu. I heard that 5.0 is the major re-write, a totally new Toshiba Tactile Intimacy Feedback Loop, but that won't be out until next year. But 4.2 works pretty good, you'll like it."

"OK. I'll try it. Thank you very much."

Letters to the Editor

Fear of the unknown

Hafa Adai, Greg Cruz and Taotao Tano:

I want to begin by apologizing for my rather long and lengthy letter to the editor, or "novel" as you called it. Sometimes when I write, I get so caught up I just can't seem to stop. I will work on keeping it short and sweet as much as possible in the future.

I also want to apologize if I offended you. Perhaps the best way to find a solution to our problems affecting us here in the CNMI is to sit down together and discuss the issues peacefully and amicably. I am sure we would all prefer intelligent reasoning over shouting and slamming our fists and threatening each other.

It is sad that many people would prefer the status quo over a major overhaul of our system. Change, such as federalization of our immigration and minimum wage system, is often met with great resistance because people fear the unknown as much as they fear uncertainty. The fear of federalization has caused many to embrace a broken immigration system, one that has been plagued with loopholes, mismanagement, and unremitting repeals. If you read HR 3079 and its intent, I think it addresses all these fears and puts them to rest. As Yoda from Star Wars put it so eloquently, "Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. Hate leads to suffering." Fear of change must be overcome with hope and optimism that the United States' intervention with our immigration system will bring hope, optimism, and change we so desperately need.

One must keep in mind that the bill is not, as it is too often represented, the federalization of the CNMI. The bill is aimed at only federalization of immigration, as is the case now for Guam and other U.S. territories. When the NMI moved to join the U.S. system, decades ago, the move was initiated by the NMI, not the U.S. federal government. There certainly was no fear then of the U.S. federal government. Why should the U.S. want to "take over" the CNMI now? If one reads, even cursorily, the statement of Congressional Intent in the introduction to HR 3079, one can only conclude that the purpose of the bill is for the long-term improvement of the CNMI. And it completely confounds me that an organization that touts support of the indigenous populace could be against an increase in minimum wage. How many Chamorros and Carolinians, not to mention other U.S. citizens and FAS citizens residing and working here, are opposed to a salary increase?

And speaking of knowledge and being educated, I urge all to actually read HR 3079. There's some pretty good stuff in there for our local population. How many are aware of the guaranteed funding provisions for vocational training and education of our local residents so they can begin to replace the guest workers and decrease the need for them? It's in there, along with other provisions for our citizens. And wow! How many of our citizens will end up with federal jobs, among them retirees—just as they are employed by TSA. Pretty good stuff for our people in my estimation!

The litmus test we should all use to address the need for federal intervention with regard to immigration and minimum wage is: Are there any signs of economic recovery in the near future? From what I read in the papers everyday, the answer is no. We really need to stop portraying the United States as an evil empire. Read the history of the Covenant. Who was it that pushed for this Covenant? Wasn't it our very own people? Wasn't it fair? Didn't the United States live up to their end of the deal?

Please note that the United States will not push property taxes or take over the CNMI, as rumor often has it. As a fellow American and patriot, I believe the United States will continue to look after this great Commonwealth. As I mentioned before, the United States has nothing to gain by destroying our economy and turning the CNMI into a welfare state. Judging from the CNMI's high unemployment rate, inflation, the huge number of food stamp recipients, and emigration of our people to Guam, Hawaii, and the U.S. mainland, it seems we have already become an impoverished set of islands unable to properly manage the problems we face today.

For the record, I am strongly opposed to anyone who believes our minimum wage should remain the same. Apparently, so are the majority of our people living here today! Let's do a fair survey and ask 1,000 random people if they would like to get paid $3.55 per hour or $6.00 per hour. What do you think their answer will be? We all know that a person earning $3.55 cannot pay the bills these days without the assistance of the local and federal government.

Greg, I want you to know that I admire your courage and conviction to speak out on several issues, regardless of our differences. I would much prefer a person who stands up for what he or she believes in over someone who complains about the need for change yet really does nothing about it.

I wholeheartedly agree with you that knowledge is power. But knowledge is even more powerful when it is balanced with humility, compassion, and a sense of fairness for all. One thing we certainly agree on is change is needed. How we go about getting there is still left to intelligent debate and discussion. My house or office is always open to you to meet or discuss anything.

All my best to you and your family and may God bless us all.

P.S. For the record, I am not the CNMI's popular blogger Lil Hammerhead, but thank you for the compliment. Lil appears to be female, and last I checked, I am all male.

Ed Propst
Familian haolepino
Dandan, Saipan

Make elected officials accountable

I'm from St. Louis, Missouri in the U.S. I've been a resident of Saipan since 2004. For a long time now I've read many articles about people being against federalization of immigration. Now I read an article about a group being formed to protect "the interests of the CNMI's Indigenous peoples."

What people are forgetting or don't understand is that the CNMI is part of the United States and all people in the CNMI are protected by the Constitution of the United States. As part of the United States, but not a state, you still answer to the federal government. All 50 states govern locally but are still answer to Washington. CNMI should also.

No one is out to harm the interests of the indigenous people of the CNMI. The federal government has the resources, financially or otherwise, to control immigration and keep the CNMI safe. The current administration is against federalization because they aren't being held accountable for poor management. With federalization that will change.

The CNMI is in the situation that it is today because of the poor management of the elected officials who run the government. I don't mean just the Fitial Administration either. If people in the CNMI want the economic situation to improve, then elect candidates who can do the job in the interests of all. Hold government officials accountable for their performance. That's every citizens' right to do. If you are not registered to vote then, then register to vote. When officials do a poor job, hold them accoutable. Accountability is exactly why over $54 million dollars in grants from the federal government is sitting unclaimed. $54,000,000! Millions of that is for water improvement projects. I thought that was a hot issue. Make change happen by holding our elected officials accountable for poor performance.

William J Ballard
Capital Hill

'Truly disingenuous'

Mr Cruz, you and your forefathers gave up your right to independence and self-rule the day the first resort went up. You can talk about TaoTao Tano, all you want. The fact of the matter is self-rule, and independence have driven the CNMI into a poverty hole so deep, we cannot recover without continued U.S. support.

It is all well and good to rail against the federalization of CNMI immigration, and all the caveats that will without a doubt be attached. But to stand in D.C. against such policies while holding a hand out for federal money is truly disingenuous. If not for federal dollars, there would be no emergency services, no hospital, and no public works.

A simple Google search will show that the indigenous population of the NMI are far outnumbered by immigrant labor. Yet these people who make up the majority of the populace are not allowed to have any say in the goings on of day-to-day operations in the sham that is our government. To exclude the majority of the population in favor of what a local wants will only make the hole we live in deeper. I hope that your group will make a sincere effort to include all people who make the NMI run. My number is available from the editor anytime you want to talk.

Paul Harsany
Garapan, Saipan

Sattelite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲81° ▼73°	▲82° ▼75°	▲82° ▼73°	▲81° ▼74°	▲81° ▼74°

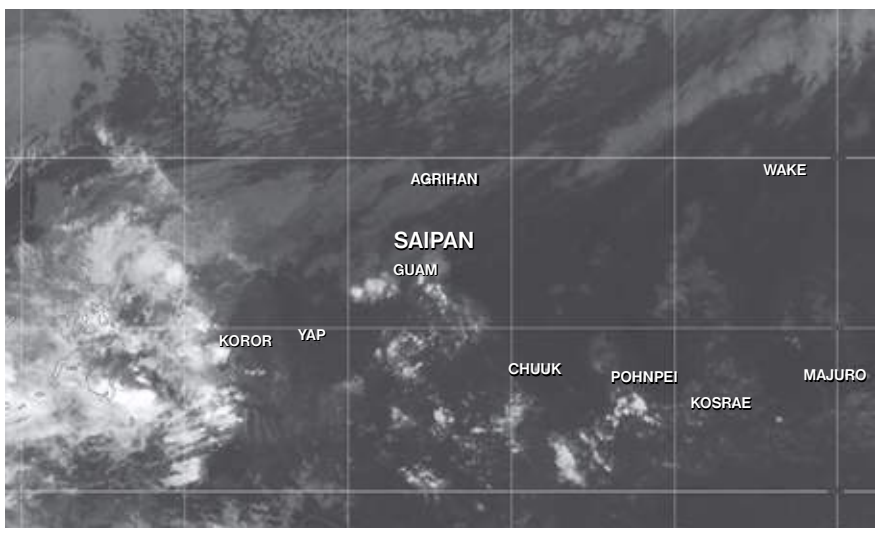
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Showers	▲84	▼75
Palau	Cloudy	▲88	▼78
Yap	Cloudy	▲88	▼77
Chuuk	Mostly Sunny	▲88	▼80
Pohnpei	Showers	▲90	▼77
Kosrae	Mostly Cloudy	▲86	▼77
Majuro	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼79

Around The Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲70	▼61
Beijing	Partly Sunny	▲41	▼16
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	▲63	▼52
Honolulu	Cloudy	▲78	▼67
London	Mostly Cloudy	▲45	▼32
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲71	▼50
Manila	Rain	▲79	▼70
Melbourne	Sunny	▲81	▼57
Miami	Showers	▲82	▼70
New York	Mostly Cloudy	▲49	▼24
Osaka	Partly Sunny	▲41	▼30
Paris	Partly Sunny	▲48	▼29
Pusan	Sunny	▲39	▼20
Rome	Sunny	▲56	▼32
Salem	Partly Sunny	▲52	▼34
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	▲60	▼44
Seoul	Sunny	▲32	▼14
Tokyo	Partly Sunny	▲46	▼32
Washington, DC	Partly Sunny	▲56	▼29

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, THURSDAY, FEB. 14, 2008
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A trade-wind disturbance is producing scattered showers within 80 miles of a line from 10N147E to 13N144E. Also convergent trade-winds are triggering scattered showers within 70 miles of a line from 12N140E to 15N146E. This entire area includes Guam, Rota, Tinian and Saipan. A cold front extends southwestward from 25N165E to 18N155E. Extensive cloudiness and scattered showers are found along and up to 130 miles northwest of the front. A shear line runs southwestward from 20N153E to the north of the Marianas to 14N140E to 14N130E and beyond. Scattered showers are found along and up to 150 miles northwest of shear line east of 140E and up to 250 miles north of shear line west of 140E. Trade-wind convergence is triggering scattered showers and a few thunderstorms in an area west of Koror between 3N to 8N from 130E to 134E. Also scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are occurring between the equator and 3N from 130E to 132E. Trade-wind convergence is causing scattered showers within 70 miles of a line from 4N170E to 5N175E to 4N180.

Tides

Saipan Harbor		
03:29AM Today	High Tide:	1.5 Feet
07:29AM Today	Low Tide:	1.3 Feet
12:55PM Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
09:08PM Today	Low Tide:	0.2 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:42AM	6:21PM
Saturday	6:42AM	6:21PM
Sunday	6:41AM	6:21PM
Monday	6:41AM	6:22PM
Tuesday	6:40AM	6:22PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	12:31PM	01:04AM
Saturday	01:31PM	02:08AM
Sunday	02:34PM	03:10AM
Monday	03:38PM	04:09AM
Tuesday	04:38PM	05:01AM

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 15, 2008

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota			
CO 9313	8:30am	9:05am	3,4,7
Saipan-Guam			
CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	Daily
CO9597	8:30am	9:20am	1,2,5,6
CO9313	8:30am	10:00am	3,4,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	Daily
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Narita			
NW 078	8:25am	1:30pm	Daily via Nagoya
NW 075	4:50pm	7:30pm	Daily
Saipan-Osaka			
NW 083	4:30pm	7:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Nagoya			
NW 078	8:25am	11:05am	Daily
Saipan-Manila			
CO 895	4:45pm	6:35pm	6
CO 895	6:45pm	8:35pm	3
Saipan-Seoul			
OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 606	3:30pm	7:00pm	2,4,6,7
Saipan-Busan			
OZ 608	4:00am	7:35am	1,4,5,7
Saipan-Guanzhou			
CZ 3008	5:00am	8:00am	2,6
Saipan-Shanghai			
MU 590	4:20am	7:00am	2,6
Guam-Manila			
CO 891	6:00am	10:30am	3 via Yap and Koror
CO 893	6:30am	8:05am	6
CO 893	8:25am	10:00am	2,7
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:45am	1,2,4,6,7
Guam-Hongkong			
CO 909	7:45pm	10:40pm	1,5
Guam-Rota			
CO 9598	10:15am	10:45am	1,2,6

ARRIVALS

Rota-Saipan			
CO 9598	11:10am	11:45am	1,2,6
Guam-Saipan			
CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	Daily
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9598	10:15am	11:45am	1,2,6 via Rota
CO9600	10:45am	11:35am	3,4,5,7
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily
Narita-Saipan			
NW 076	10:35am	3:05pm	Daily
NW 077	6:15pm	1:10am+1	Daily via Nagoya
Osaka-Saipan			
NW 084	10:40am	3:10pm	Daily
Nagoya-Saipan			
NW 077	8:45pm	1:10am+1	Daily
Manila-Saipan			
CO 890	9:15am	2:55pm	6
CO 890	11:45am	5:35pm	3
Seoul-Saipan			
OZ 605	9:00am	2:30pm	2,4,6,7
OZ 603	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
Busan-Saipan			
OZ 607	9:30pm	2:50am+1	3,4,6,7
Guanzhou-Saipan			
CZ 3007	8:00pm	4:00am+1	1,5
Shanghai-Saipan			
MU 589	8:05pm	3:00am+1	1,5
Manila-Guam			
CO 894	11:20am	4:55pm	2,7
CO 894	7:45pm	1:20am+1	6
CO 892	9:45pm	5:25am+1	3 via Koror
CO 892	9:45pm	6:30am+1	3 via Koror and Yap
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:15pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7
Hongkong-Guam			
CO 910	11:40pm	6:20am+1	1,5
Rota-Guam			
CO 9313	9:30am	10:00am	3,4,7

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; PR: Philippine Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CA: Air China; NW: Northwest; JO: Japan Airlines; OZ: Asiana; MU: China Eastern ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

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- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
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  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

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- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

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- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, CIC Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

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- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Sunday, Saipan Tribune offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $182. Off-island subscription rate is $376 per year. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

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Letters to the Editor

It's time to get tough

Kudos to Judge Govendo for doing the right thing. In the Angel Malite probate case, Judge Govendo ordered the return of the $1.3 million in the suspicious overpayment of various attorney's fees. He ordered a freeze on Roman Demapan's bank account. Roman is a legal intern involved in the Malite case; he is making an outrageous $125 an hour, adding up to an even more outrageous over $200,000. Interestingly, a Google search of legal interns shows an average annual salary in the U.S. of under $40,000, making Roman Demapan quite possibly the highest paid legal intern in the U.S. It appears that Judge Govendo suspects (as we all do) that the legal fees paid out were more theft than reasonable payment for a probate case. What Judge Govendo did was put on hold all the monies involved, in order to obtain some breathing room for the sorting out of reasonable fees versus ill-gotten gains. Additionally, Govendo suspended the two probate attorneys, Atalig and Yana, who are suspected of gross self-enrichment at the expense of the Malite estate beneficiaries.

Considering the history of the estate proceedings, all of Judge Govendo's rulings were decidedly reasonable. He was trying to protect the estate from those very same people who were hired supposedly to look out for the best interests of the estate. On this subject, can someone enlighten me as to why it takes one incompetent estate guardian, two generously paid attorneys, and one well connected, grossly overly paid legal intern to manage a probate case? Yes, Judge Govendo was, indeed, prudent and reasonable in his actions.

However, reason went flying out the door when Chief Justice Demapan reversed Govendo's ruling within a day of Atalig and Yana's appeal, and of giving no notice to the other parties involved. Not surprisingly, Roman Demapan is Chief Justice Demapan's brother, and Atalig is the chief justice's ex-law partner. Whew. One needn't be a rocket scientist to ponder how unethical this truly is.

This is another case of what appears to be gross self-enrichment and blatant nepotism. From what has been reported in the news about this case, both historically as well as currently, I have to give Judge Govendo very high marks for attempting to right some terrible wrongs. As for Judge Demapan....well, he is crossed off my Christmas card list, as well as any ballot on which he may ever appear.

Surely, it would be in the interest of justice to analyze the breakdown of the $1.3 million: How it was paid out, to whom it went, and where is it now (maybe an offshore account by now?). I trust the AG (or maybe the FBI) and the white-collar crime task force will be looking into these extraordinarily suspicious dealings. The government has to make it exceedingly clear that there is zero tolerance for fraud.

Speaking of white-collar crime, it is most enlightening to look back on the Governor's press release dated July 5, 2007, regarding the Public Auditor's findings on its audit of the MPLA files. At that time, Governor Fitial instructed the AG to thoroughly review the report. The OPA report revealed a laundry list of outright financial misdeeds, painfully obvious unethical conduct, self-enrichment (of the MPLA members and their selected friends), and blatantly exorbitant travel costs (ahhhh... the famous junkets).

From that press release, Governor Fitial instructed the office of the Attorney General to place the highest priority on the investigation of these white-collar corruption cases involving the former MPLA. I have asked the

See IT'S TIME on next page

Rude e-mail

To Carlos Ketebengang of DEQ:

On your e-mail to my husband, Felix T. Sasamoto Jr., dated Jan. 28, 2008 on a Monday 11:43am, you stated: *You are a type of fisherman that does not care about the future. All you care about is the money that will only last two minutes. These are the few thoughts that came to mind when I received a photo of you holding up your catch of the day. I suggest that you take a few minutes and think of what you did. If you consider yourself a professional fisherman be considerate enough to think of the future.*

An e-mail from Peter Houk to my husband states that: *"Carlos, despite his rude initial e-mail to you, is actually a nice person who cares about his environment. His e-mail was not influenced by me in the least, but I understood what he was getting at. Unfortunately again, it was a rude way to initiate a discussion."*

Is this how some government employees spend their government time and using their position—sending a rude email to a law-abiding fisherman. On all of this controversy, I remained quiet to respect the interest of local fishermen and environmentalists but there are some productive and standard way of settling this kind of issue. It has gone far enough that even our private life is at stake, some people calling my work and finding out what kind of work I do, my hours of work and what kind of medicine am I drinking.

As a fisherman's wife, every time my husband goes fishing, there's a fear in me that he will not come back because his life is at stake every time he goes fishing but what can I do, I'm only here to support him. Fishing is in his blood and that extraordinary capabilities were given to him for a reason. Don't get him wrong on catching those Napoleon wrasse because if ever they will put up a Management Law regarding this species, he is not against it.

Mr. Carlos, did you really have to send this rude email instead of talking to your supervisor or manager to arrange a meeting with my husband to settle this? This can be settled in a simple informal meeting between the local fisherman community, DEQ, DFW and biologists. The "two minutes money" that you are talking about paved the way to a comfortable way of living that my husband provided for me and our only daughter. It's not much but just enough to live. Every fisherman's dream is to land a big catch to the extent of not breaking the law. Some claimed that law is not an excuse for this

See RUDE on next page

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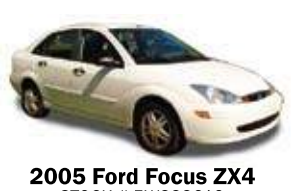
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IT'S TIME

From Page 14

Attorney General's Office to prosecute these cases without delay. The Fitial administration has also urged the Office of the Attorney General to investigate the reported travel abuses for possible criminal prosecution. Hmm....where is this high priority, quick resolution to the MPLA's squandering of millions of dollars?

This is arguably the most extreme case of recent white-collar crime and misuse of taxpayers monies (among MANY notable examples). Yet, there appears little information of any follow-up regarding the MPLA's investigation and eventual prosecution. Fital stated, "We cannot excuse such gross abuse of public funds." And I agree. It is indeed inexcusable. Could it be that the MPLA members are family connected? Was someone paid off to forget about the case? Was the AG told by higher-ups not to pursue this? When the evidence is so utterly damning, one would reasonably expect that there would be a high priority for the government to prosecute these ex-officials of the MPLA, lest it set an example to others that misuse of public funds is encouraged and allowed by the CNMI government.

There was a clear call for action by Governor Fitial. How can it possibly take over seven months to follow through on this, when the evidence has already been clearly outlined by the OPA? Let's hope that this is not another example of the well-connected getting away with outright robbery of public monies. It is incumbent upon the CNMI leadership to ensure that these crimes DO NOT go unpunished. These crimes benefit the selfish and heartless few, at the expense of all citizens of the CNMI. Time to get tough.

Bill Weiss
Puerto Rico, Saipan

RUDE

From Page 14

but if there's no law, all will be in total chaos.

Mr. Houk, if you are a true friend that you stated in your recent e-mail to my husband, you should have helped resolve this matter and facilitated a friendly discussion between my husband and your agency. Your agency and where my husband work work together on this kind of matter. What's so hard about picking up the phone and calling "your friend"! And if they really want to protect this species, why only now? My husband caught it in a traditional way of fishing, not through SCUBA. He is not against the management law that bans the taking of the Napoleon Wrasse in certain seasons in order to give time to breed, spawn and multiply and will also satisfy the need of the local spear fisherman during open season. I'm no environmentalist, fisherman or biologists but simply a working fisherman's wife that's trying to live our life to the fullest.

Suzette O. Sasamoto
via e-mail

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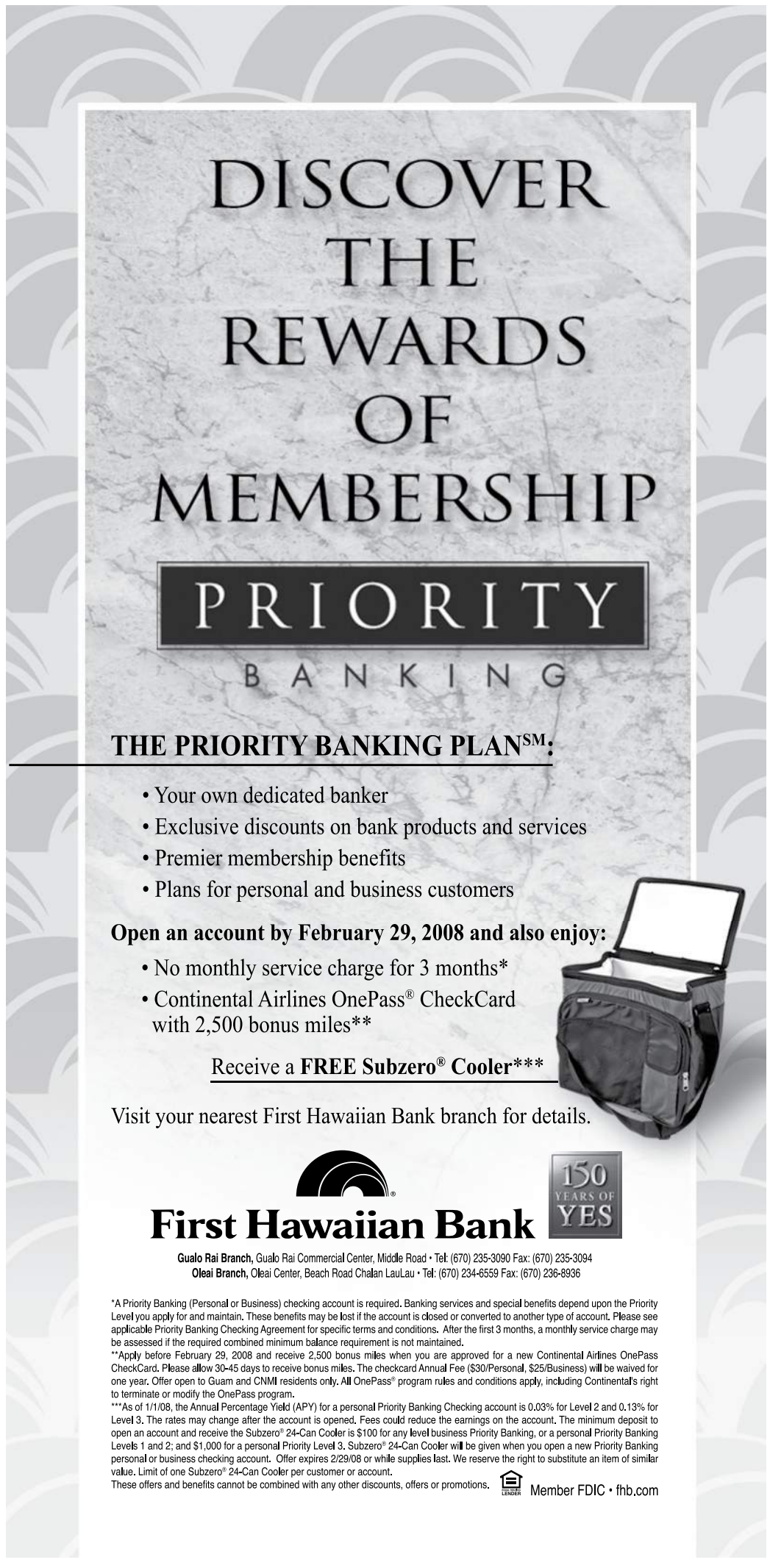
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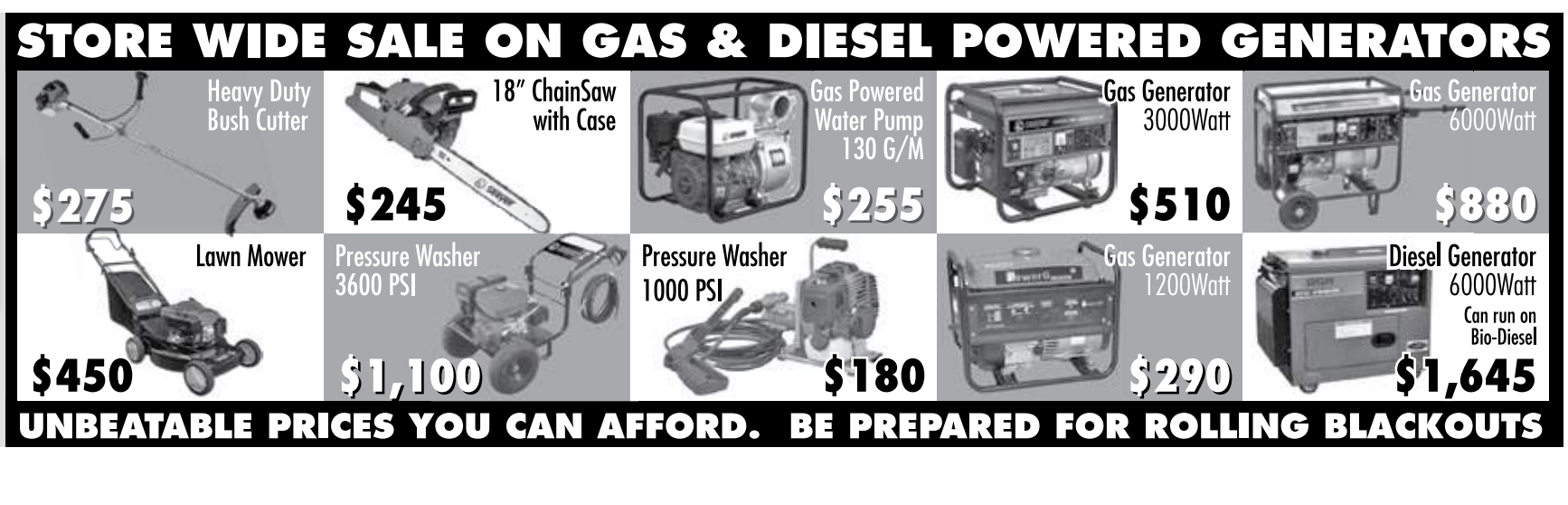
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Marianas Dive expands its reach to Tinian

Against the backdrop of Tinian's annual pepper festival, members of local dive group Marianas Dive will conduct a series of events designed to increase Tinian's appeal to divers while creating a foundation of new divers with a greater understanding of what lies beneath some of the most inviting water in the world.

On Saturday and Sunday morning, Feb. 16-17, group members will make exploratory dives with Tinian Fun Diving, a local dive operation. Owner Mr. Shine states that the area around Tinian's southwestern tip is "untouched and full of possible dive sites," including relics from World War II.

As described by Marians Dive president Mike Tripp, "the ultimate goal is to put Tinian on the diving map with multiple dive sites that are short, easy boat rides from the harbor. This will help make Tinian a destination where divers spend a few days or more, taking in all the sites the island has to offer both above and below the surface."

In addition to these morning dives, Marianas Dive will lead an underwater cleanup of Taga Beach on Saturday at 4pm. This will be the group's fifth cleanup of this kind and the first on Tinian.

"We're excited to do one of our 'treasure hunts' at Taga beach. The water is so clear I can't wait to jump in," said member Mark James. Tanks and mesh bags will be provided. All certified divers wishing to participate are encouraged to do so.

The final dive event of the weekend will take place at the Tinian Dynasty Hotel pool from 2pm to 4pm on Sunday afternoon. Marianas Dive instructors will offer free Discover SCUBA lessons to interested individuals over the age of 12. Discover SCUBA participants will have the opportunity to try diving in a controlled environment, including using full SCUBA gear and breathing underwater. An adult must accompany participants under the age of 18.

Discover Scuba signup forms and additional information about these and other events will be available from members at the Marians Dive booth on the festival grounds during festival hours. Those interested in hearing a dive tale or two as well as learning more about the group's goals and objectives are encouraged to stop by and jump in!

"We are really excited about this weekend. Not only do we get to experience the best of Tinian hospitality with the pepper festival but we also get to make a positive contribution to Tinian's tourism industry. Of course it would not be possible without the help from those making it all happen including Debra Fleming of the Fleming Hotel, Kiri Jackson from the Dynasty and local boat captain John Barcinas as well as the staff at the mayors office," said Tripp.

Marianas Dive is a growing group of individuals with a passion for everything underwater and specifically what Saipan Tinian & Rota have to offer as dive destinations. The group welcomes community members to join and help the CNMI build a truly world class dive destination while promoting our excellent diving locally and globally. Members meet twice monthly.

Visit www.marianasdive.com for more information. ***(PR)***

Environmental regulators meet on military buildup

SANTA RITA, Guam—The Joint Guam Program Office and Naval Facilities Pacific, Hawaii, this week is holding its third round of Partnering Sessions with federal and local environmental regulatory agencies to update them on the status of the military relocation as related to the Environmental Impact Studies.

These working-level sessions bring together the Environmental Protection Agency, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and others to discuss planning and studies with the Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force. The Partnering Sessions serve to bring these cooperating agencies together to identify any areas needing additional review or resources early on, helping to facilitate the process as the projected January 2010 date for a record of decision approaches.

"Specifically, the Navy will update attendees on the status of master planning as related to the environmental process," said CAPT Robert Lee, JGPO Acting Director. As required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Navy is studying multiple alternatives for the placement of Marine Corps training, housing and other facilities to determine the most feasible locations.

The presentation shared with the environmental agencies was first shared with committee chairs of the Civilian-Military Task Force. JGPO sought to update the CMTF and collected valuable feedback from attendees at this meeting. ***(PR)***

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

Happy 9th birthday greetings go out to Elphi Deliana C. Pua. "Wishing you the best on your birthday. God bless you and many more to come." Love from your entire familia—your parents and your one and only baby brother, Juan George M. Pua II.

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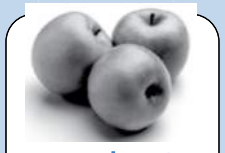

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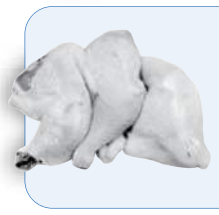

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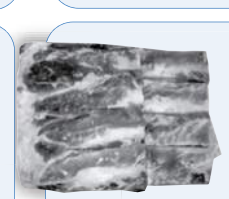

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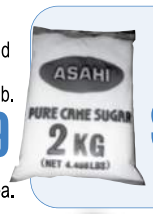

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R07-036B	2003	TACOMA 4X4 D/CAB	AUTO	85270	RED	ABR-739	15,999
R07-038F	2004	TACOMA 4X4 XTRACAB	AUTO	49609	BEIGE	ABV-159	11,899
R07-026F	2004	TACOMA 4X2 REG/CAB	MANUAL	46550	WHITE	ACA-308	9,999
OTHER CARS & TRUCKS							
U08-007P	2005	HYUNDAI SANTA FE 4DR.	AUTO	48717	BLACK	ACE-248	11,599
U07-106P	2004	HONDA CIVIC DX DR.	AUTO	50416	SILVER	ADF-401	8,999
U07-107P	2004	HONDA CIVIC DX DR.	AUTO	48755	SILVER	ADF-421	8,999
U07-108P	2004	HONDA CIVIC DX DR.	AUTO	45099	SILVER	ADF-431	8,999
U07-109P	2004	HONDA CIVIC DX DR.	AUTO	43869	SILVER	ADF-371	8,999
U07-034T	2000	NISSAN MAXIMA GXE 4DR.	AUTO	68648	WHITE	ACT-812	8,399
U07-104T	2003	NISSAN MURANO SE	AUTO	32000	PEWT	ABZ-615	16,799
U07-095T	1999	MAZDA MILLENIA 4DR. SEDAN	AUTO	91014	SILVER	ABP-583	7,999
U07-118T	2004	MAZDA MX3 4DR. SEDAN	AUTO	33366	SILVER	ADH-312	12,799
CONSIGNMENT	2001	FORD ESCAPE	AUTO	39530	BLUE	ABW-458	10,899
VANS							
U07-096T	2000	SIENNA XLE	AUTO	92766	GRAY	ACO-561	8,999
R08-001F	2004	SIENNA LE	AUTO	164483	WHITE	ABY-567	12,999
SPORT UTILITY							
U07-064T	2001	4RUNNER 4WD	AUTO	56882	CHAMPAIGNE	ABY-153	13,599
U07-050T	2002	RAV4 4DR. 4WD	AUTO	39182	WHITE	ABW-677	12,799
U07-082P	2004	RAV4 4DR. 2WD	AUTO	68919	GRAY		13,599

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2x6x14	$8.50/Pc	
2x6x16		$14.50/Pc
2x6x20	$11.90/Pc	

UTILITY LUMBERS

	Regular	Treated
2x4x12	$4.20/Pc	$6.20/Pc
2x4x14	$5.00/Pc	$7.00/Pc
2x4x16	$6.00/Pc	$8.20/Pc
2x4x18	$6.30/Pc	$9.60/Pc
2x4x20	$7.20/Pc	$10.50/Pc

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Ceiling tile 2'*4' $3.00/pc
Rope $2/pc
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Roof tin 15% off
Shower room 35% off
Window 35% off
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Downspout $8/pc
Squre bar $4/pc
Formica $5/pc
Ceramic tile $0.3/pc

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Local students compete for Mathcounts honor

Middle school Mathletes from Saipan, Tinian and Rota will compete in the Chapter Competition of the national MATHCOUNTS program tomorrow, Feb. 16, 2008 at the Multi-Purpose Center, in Susupe from 8am to 12pm The competition has been organized by EFC Engineers and Architects Corp.

A total of 15 schools and approximately 150 students will compete. Schools represented are: Calvary Christian Academy, Chacha Oceanview Jr. High School, Eucon International School, Eskuelan San Francisco De Borja, Grace Christian Academy-Saipan, Grace Christian Academy-Rota, G.T.C. Elementary School, Hopwood Jr. High School, Marianas Baptist Academy, Mount Carmel School, Rota Jr. High School, Saipan Community School, Saipan International School, Tinian Elementary School, and Whispering Palms School.

Teachers and students have been preparing for the competition since last September. Students will compete individually and as teams in written and fast-paced oral matches. Subjects include algebra, probability, statistics and geometry. Winners will receive trophies, and will advance to the State MATHCOUNTS finals, to be held on March 15, 2008.

MATHCOUNTS is a national program designed to improve math skills among U.S. students. The program focuses on middle school students, who are at a crucial stage in developing and sustaining math interest and ability.

Local sponsors include Bridge Capital LLC, Chongs Corp., Deloitte & Touche, DFS Saipan, EFC Engineers & Architects Corp., National Office Supply, Subway Investments, Transamerica Corporation, UMDA, and Winzler and Kelly.

MATHCOUNTS founding sponsors are the National Society of Professional Engineers, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and CAN Foundation. ***(PR)***

IRS returns to NMI for follow up on illegal refund scheme

SEATTLE—Last year, the U.S. government identified a fraudulent refund scheme involving hundreds of individuals from the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, both nonresidents and locals, who filed income tax returns with the Internal Revenue Service requesting U.S. Treasury refund checks, including the Earned Income Tax Credit.

The EITC is a refundable federal income tax credit for low-income working individuals and families. Most CNMI residents are not required to file a tax return with the U.S. IRS and are not eligible to claim the EITC.

The U.S. IRS, the CNMI Division of Revenue and Taxation, and other government agencies collaborated to unravel this fraudulent refund scheme. Then the IRS held a walk-in clinic on Saipan in May of 2007 to assist individuals in filing amended tax returns, and in returning the money to the Internal Revenue Service. Many CNMI taxpayers knew they were not eligible for the IRS refund.

In December 2007, the IRS sent statutory notices to the individuals who received an EITC refund, but who had not corrected their filing and repaid the refund.

A representative of the U.S. IRS is currently on Saipan for another walk-in clinic to help filers correct their filing and repay the refunds. Individuals who attended the May 2007 clinic, and who have residual IRS issues, may also come to this clinic for help. The representative is on island until today, Feb. 15, 2008.

CNMI taxpayers who received improper refunds must file a Form 1040X, Amended U.S. Tax Return, in order to repay the IRS.

Individuals who did not receive the money because their bank froze their account should also file a Form 1040X.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Clearly write on top of the Form 1040X "GUAM-CNMI ERRONEOUS REFUND"
- Fill in your name, current address, and Social Security Number
- Leave columns A and B blank
- Fill in all zeros in column C
- Write the amount you are repaying on Line 21
- On page 2, include the statement "Tax return should not have been filed. I have no U.S. IRS filing requirement." If your bank account was frozen because of an EITC Refund, write "My bank account was frozen because of an erroneous EITC refund."
- Sign the Form 1040X

Send the Form 1040X and payment (if a refund was received) to:

Internal Revenue Service Center
11601 Roosevelt Boulevard - Drop Point N-441
Philadelphia, PA 19154

An IRS representative will be available from 9am to 5pm to assist individuals with erroneous EITC refund issues and answer related questions at:

U.S. Attorney's office
Horiguchi Building 3rd floor
Garapan, Saipan MP

CNMI residents can also call the IRS at (215) 516-2000 (not a toll free call). Tell the IRS employee who assists you that you are calling about a "Guam/CNMI Erroneous Refund." ***(PR)***

Two business grant programs now available

HILO, Hawaii—The USDA Rural Development announced this week the availability of over $44 million in Rural Business Enterprise Grant funds, and $2.6 million for the Rural Business Opportunity Grant Program nationwide.

Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands will receive $50,000. The State of Hawaii, which also covers American Samoa, will receive RBEG funds amounting to $118,000. Funds for the RBOG are retained in Washington, DC for national competition.

The RBEG program is designed to finance and facilitate development of private business enterprises. RBEG is used to assist public bodies and nonprofit corporations in financing and facilitating development of small and emerging private business enterprises. Projects must be located in areas outside the boundary of a city of 50,000 or more and its immediately adjacent urbanized area. Grant funds may be used for technical assistance for private business enterprises (i.e., market research, product and/or service improvement, feasibility study, etc.), training, when necessary, in connection with technical assistance or financial assistance to third parties through a loan.

The purpose of the RBOG is to promote sustainable economic development in rural communities with exceptional needs. This is accomplished by making grants to organizations to provide for economic development planning, technical assistance, or training. The program is available to public bodies, non-profit corporations, cooperatives that conduct activities for the mutual benefit of the members, and whose members are primarily rural residents.

The deadline to submit a RBOG application is March 31, 2008, and the RBEG pre-application deadline is May 30, 2008.

According to Lorraine P. Shin, USDA Rural Development State Director, "Increasing economic opportunity and improving the quality of life for people in rural America is the goal of USDA Rural Development. USDA believes rural Americans deserve the same services enjoyed by people in suburban and urban areas while retaining the advantages of small town living."

USDA Rural Development's mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life in rural communities. As a venture capital entity, Rural Development has invested over $72 billion since the beginning of the Bush Administration. These investments provide equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. Over 1.2 million jobs have been created or saved through these investments. Further information on rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development Office, or by visiting USDA's web site at http://www.rurdev.usda.gov.

For more information on USDA Rural Development programs, please contact Shirley M. U. Heatherly, Area Specialist, at (808) 483-8600 x118 or Shirley.heatherly@hi.usda.gov or Joseph M. Diego, Area Director, at (671) 472-7272 or joseph.diego@pb.usda.gov in Guam. ***(USDA)***

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3 pk Sanma Pike Mackarel $3.79/cs.

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Pork Spareribs 20# 5 Up $15.99/cs.

Shrimp Ball 8 oz. $1.59/lb.

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Beef Brisket For Tinala $2.95/lb.

Beef Ribeye 'CML' $3.79/lb.

Cattlefish Ball $1.49/lb.

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Kao Attack Detergent $7.29

Dinty Moore Beef Stew 4 oz. $4.31

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Takeda Salmon Roe 70g $7.99

Dawn Dishwashing Detergent 16 oz. $1.71

Libby's Corned Beef 12 oz. $1.69

Takeya Miso 500 g. $3.59

PRODUCE

US Yellow Onion 47¢/lb.

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Japanese Cooking Pot w/ Cover (33 cm.) $44.80

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USDA launches $275K in conservation grants

HONOLULU—USDA-NRCS Pacific Islands Area director Lawrence Yamamoto announced the request for proposals for State Conservation Innovation Grants competition. The CIG program is designed to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies. The deadline to apply is March 31, 2008.

"Conservation Innovation Grants offer islanders a unique opportunity to test and establish new conservation tools that will help protect natural resources as they work on our island farms, ranches, and forest land," said Yamamoto. "We must produce food and fiber for our families. The NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant is an opportunity to help our island community find ways that are relevant and specific to our islands to meet these needs while protecting our natural resources for our children's children," he said.

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service Pacific Islands Area administers the State CIG. For Fiscal Year 2008, up to $275,000 is available for the state CIG competition. Funds for single- or multi-year projects, not to exceed three years, will be awarded through an area wide competitive grants process with applications accepted from Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands from all eligible government or non-government organizations or individuals, including federally recognized tribes.

Applicants should explain how large a geographic area the project would benefit. These projects may be at the field, farm or watershed scale and must be located on one or more islands within the Pacific Islands Area. Applications should describe the use of innovative technologies or approaches, or both, to address a natural resource conservation concern or concerns.

Funding for CIG is made available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. All proposed CIG projects must involve EQIP-eligible producers. CIG funds that are used to provide direct or indirect payments to individuals or entities to implement structural, vegetative or management practices are subject to the $450,000 EQIP payment limitation. CIG is not a research program but rather a tool to stimulate the adoption of conservation approaches or technologies that have been studied sufficiently to indicate a high likelihood of success, and are likely candidates for eventual technology transfer.

CIG will fund projects targeting innovative on-the-ground conservation, including pilot projects and field demonstrations. Technologies and approaches that are commonly used in the geographic area covered by the application, and which are eligible for funding through EQIP, are not eligible for funding through CIG. Proposed projects must conform to the description of innovative conservation projects or activities published in the Announcement of Program Funding.

CIG funds pilot projects and conservation field trials that can last from one to three years. Grants for approved projects cannot exceed 50 percent of the total project cost. At least 50 percent of the total cost of the project must come from non-Federal matching funds (cash and in-kind contributions) provided by the grantee. Qualified applicants from Guam, American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands may request a waiver of matching requirements subjects to the terms contained in existing legislation. While NRCS will provide technical oversight for each project receiving an award, the grantee is responsible for providing the technical assistance required to successfully complete the project. To view the Announcement of Program Funding or to apply visit: http://www.grants.gov/. For more information about the State CIG program, contact Michael Whitt, CIG Program Manager at 808-541-2600 ext. 153 or Michael.Whitt@hi.usda.gov. For more information about NRCS conservation programs visit http://www.hi.nrcs.usda.gov or visit the nearest USDA Service Center. ***(USDA)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

GINE FLI'E I TANO PROCLAMATION SIGNING

A proclamation signing was held on Feb. 1, 2008, and presented by Guam Lt. Gov. Mike Cruz, at the Govenor's Office in Adelup to announce Realtors' Week. The Gine Fli`e I Tano Realtor Awards Program sponsored by First Hawaiian Bank, Pacific Daily News and the Guam Association of Realtors, is an annual event which recognizes excellence in the Real Estate Industry. Front row from left, Marilou Lacson, PR officer, Guam Association of Realtors; Stephen Niu, president-elect, Guam Association of Realtors; Lt. Gov. Mike Cruz; Neat Muna, vice president, Guam Association of Realtors; Angie Araullo, sponsorship chair, Guam Association of Realtors; Lucy Callahan, Real Estate Loan Officer, First Hawaiian Bank; Jason Sakazaki; Market Development Director, Pacific Daily News; Juanita Leon Guerrero, Real Estate Loan Officer, First Hawaiian Bank and Joy Jose; Federal Political Coordinator, Guam Association of Realtors.

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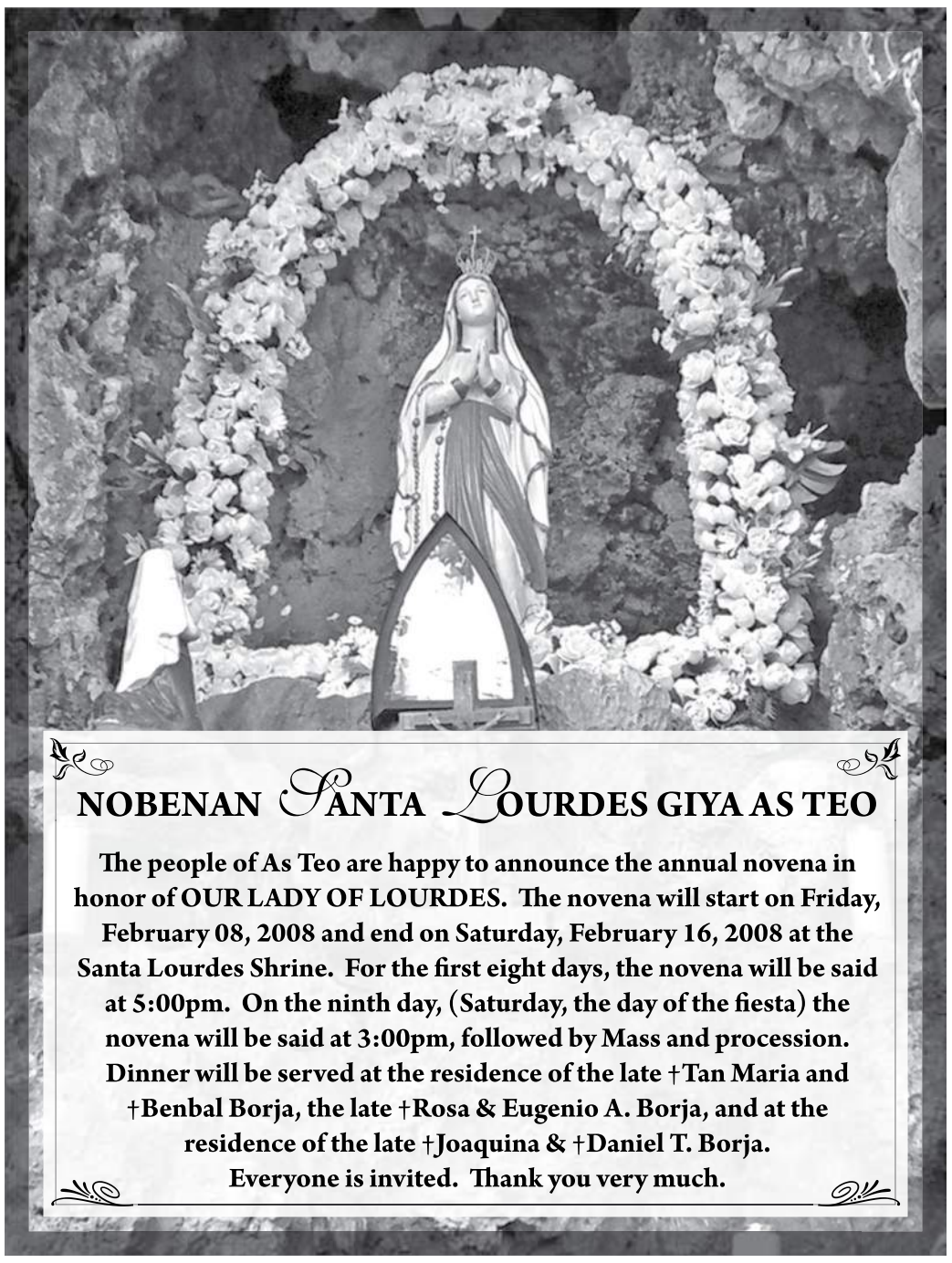

NOBENAN SANTA LOURDES GIYA AS TEO

The people of As Teo are happy to announce the annual novena in honor of OUR LADY OF LOURDES. The novena will start on Friday, February 08, 2008 and end on Saturday, February 16, 2008 at the Santa Lourdes Shrine. For the first eight days, the novena will be said at 5:00pm. On the ninth day, (Saturday, the day of the fiesta) the novena will be said at 3:00pm, followed by Mass and procession. Dinner will be served at the residence of the late †Tan Maria and †Benbal Borja, the late †Rosa & Eugenio A. Borja, and at the residence of the late †Joaquina & †Daniel T. Borja. Everyone is invited. Thank you very much.

CRIME OF THE WEEK

Attempted armed robbery

Crime Stoppers is asking the community for information on the attempted armed robbery that occurred on Monday, February 11, 2008, where two unidentified masked men entered the Leo Poker establishment armed with a possible flare gun and pepper mace. One of the suspects assaulted the security guard with the pepper mace, and a shot was fired from the flare gun used by the second suspect after the cashier refused to open the door to the cashier's booth. The suspects fled the scene empty-handed.

Anyone having information about this crime, call the Crime Stoppers hotline at 234-7272. Crime Stoppers pays cash rewards up to $1,000 for information leading to an arrest. Caller ID is not used. All calls remain anonymous.

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Nominees sought for Bizwoman of the Year

First Hawaiian Bank and Guam Business once again have joined forces to present the Third Annual Businesswoman of the Year Maga'haga Award Program. The program recognizes businesswomen who have made a difference and have "raised the bar" in the field in which they are involved.

The Maga'haga (Chamorro term for princess) Award will be given to the Businesswoman of the Year at a gala on Saturday, April 26, at the Hyatt Regency Guam. The award coincides with the release of the third 2008 issue of Guam Business, featuring a commissioned photo study of the recipient on its cover. Proceeds from the gala will be used to sponsor scholarship programs for residents of Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands.

Previous Businesswoman of the Year recipients have included Katherine Calvo Sgro, executive vice president and chairman of the board for Payless Markets Inc., 2006; and Christine Ann Won Pat Baleto, general manager of Market Wholesale Distributors Inc., 2007.

First Hawaiian Bank and Guam Business are seeking nominations, which are open to businesswomen in Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands. Nominations are welcome from local businesses, civic and women's organizations.

The winner will be selected by a panel of judges to include businesswomen and leaders in the community. The ideal candidate for the Maga'haga Award will be a woman who has made a significant difference to business through her organization or business; has contributed to the community; is a leading representative of her profession or field; and displays the best qualities of a woman in business.

Nomination forms are available at all First Hawaiian Bank branches, the Guam Business office at the Foremost compound, and online at www.guambusinessmagazine.com. The deadline to submit nominations is March 5, 2008.

Submit nominations to:
Editor - Guam Business
Foremost Compound
gb_editor@glimpsesofguam.com
Fax: 671-649-8883

NMC names 51 students to the President's List

Northern Marianas College President Dr. Carmen Fernandez said that 52 students earned a spot on the President's List for the Fall 2007 semester.

To qualify for this distinguished honor, students need to have achieved a term grade point average of at least 3.96 and enrolled as a full-time student.

1. Ray C. Aguon
2. Wilma Atalig
3. Carlynn S. Attao
4. Erik O. Basa
5. Raymond T. Basa
6. Aileen S. Benavente
7. Nicole DLG. Benjamin
8. Shequita Li Dear Bennett
9. Mary Ann Landingin Cabael
10. Winnifred Paras Cabrera
11. Rose Torres Castro
12. Suel Ki C. Chang
13. Norminda Sanarez Creecy
14. Clifford Inay Cuengco
15. Kathryn Bryson Cundiff
16. Porsha Dale Ramos Dela Cruz
17. Christina Faisao Deleon Guerrero
18. Colleen Salas Deleon Guerrero
19. Patricia Jane C. Deleon Guerrero
20. Robert B. Deleon Guerrero
21. Nora Taga Fujihira
22. Lourdes L. Hart
23. Pascale Harvey
24. Nanette Borja Hurst
25. Semona Ann B. Igama
26. Rosezonia S. Jack
27. Maria Ana K. Lizama
28. Luzviminda R. Mack
29. Diane Abigania Mallari
30. Lorna V. Manahane
31. Tracey Lynn Santos Manglona
32. Walter D. Mendez
33. Elena Marie B. Mendiola
34. Erin K. Mortensen
35. Joseph John S. Muna
36. Roque E. Pulido
37. Jan Michael Macaraeg Reyes
38. Victoria Sumilhig Sablan
39. Justin Babauta Santos
40. Ashley Marie G. Sikayun
41. Taylor E. Smith
42. Jesse Sablan Taisacan
43. Janaway Inos Takai
44. Paulette Marie Castro Tudela
45. Victoria Sablan Tudela
46. Maria Joannes Tampoya Tumaquip
47. Herman June Chong Villagomez
48. Daniel R. Villegas
49. Suguru Yagi
50. Rei Yamagishi
51. Wen Hui Ye

OSHA imposes more than $29K fine on Guam firm

SAN FRANCISCO—The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration has cited Guam Construction Co. for alleged safety violations at a sewer pipe excavation site on Ypao Road in Tamuning, Guam.

OSHA cited the company for an alleged willful violation following a planned inspection at the worksite on Oct. 26, 2007, assessing a proposed penalty of $28,000 for failure to provide cave-in protection for an employee working in a 6-foot, 6-inch deep trench. OSHA cited the construction company three times between 1999 and 2004 for violations of the excavation standard, each time for failure to provide cave-in protection. A willful violation is one committed with intentional disregard of, or plain indifference to, the requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

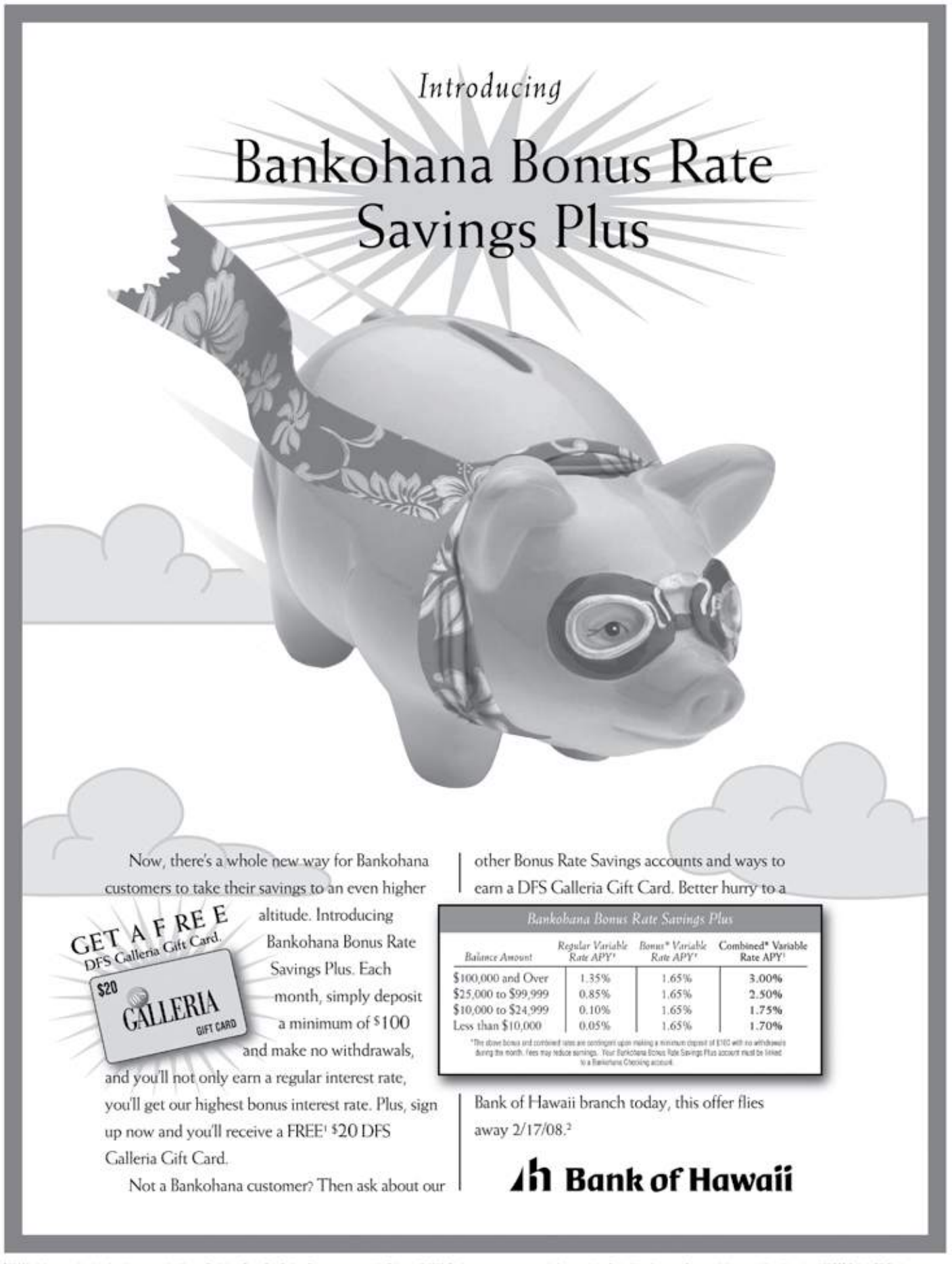
OSHA also has cited the company with two alleged serious violations. It assessed a $1,000 proposed penalty for the company's failure to remove employees from a hazardous trench until the necessary precautions had been taken to ensure their safety. OSHA also levied a $600 proposed penalty because employees were not provided warning vests or other suitable garments marked with or made of reflectorized or high-visibility material when exposed to vehicle traffic. A serious violation occurs when there is substantial probability that death or serious physical harm could result from a hazard about which the employer knew or should have known.

"These violations occurred because Guam Construction failed to follow basic safety and health requirements for employees working at the Ypao Road site," said Teresa Harrison, OSHA's acting regional administrator in San Francisco. "These violations had the potential of resulting in the death or serious injury of one or more of the company's employees."

Guam Construction, based in Barrigada, Guam, has 15 business days from receipt of the citations and proposed penalties to comply with them, to request and participate in an informal conference with OSHA's area director, or to contest the citations before the independent Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission.

OSHA operates a vigorous enforcement program, conducting more than 39,000 inspections in fiscal year 2007 and exceeding its inspection goals in each of the last eight years. In fiscal year 2007, OSHA found more than 89,000 violations of its standards and regulations.

Employers are responsible for providing safe and healthful workplaces for their employees. OSHA's role is to assure the safety and health of America's workers by setting and enforcing standards; providing training, outreach and education; establishing partnerships; and encouraging continual improvement in workplace safety and health. For more information, visit www.osha.gov. ***(DOL)***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Now, there's a whole new way for Bankohana customers to take their savings to an even higher altitude. Introducing Bankohana Bonus Rate Savings Plus. Each month, simply deposit a minimum of $100 and make no withdrawals, and you'll not only earn a regular interest rate, you'll get our highest bonus interest rate. Plus, sign up now and you'll receive a FREE[1] $20 DFS Galleria Gift Card.
Not a Bankohana customer? Then ask about our other Bonus Rate Savings accounts and ways to earn a DFS Galleria Gift Card. Better hurry to a Bank of Hawaii branch today, this offer flies away 2/17/08.[2]
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$25,000 to $99,999 | 0.85% | 1.65% | 2.50%
$10,000 to $24,999 | 0.10% | 1.65% | 1.75%
Less than $10,000 | 0.05% | 1.65% | 1.70%
*The above bonus and combined rates are contingent upon making a minimum deposit of $100 with no withdrawals during the month. Fees may reduce earnings. Your Bankohana Bonus Rate Savings Plus account must be linked to a Bankohana Checking account.
Bank of Hawaii
[1] $5,000 minimum opening deposit and balance required for new Bankohana Bonus Rate Savings Plus accounts opened by February 17, 2008. Funds to open account may not be from an existing Bank of Hawaii account. Some restrictions apply. You will receive a $20 DFS Galleria Gift Card upon account opening. Limit one $20 DFS Galleria Gift Card per account regardless of the number of accountholders. Limit one per customer. Not available for existing accounts. Good while supplies last. [2] Current Annual Percentage Yields accurate as of 2/01/08 and subject to change without notice. Interest rates and APYs may change after the account is opened. Fees may reduce earnings. Some restrictions apply.
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Business

CO Micronesia shares $5M-plus with workers

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Continental Micronesia Passenger Service Department employees at the A.B. Won Pat International Airport celebrate early yesterday morning with their profit sharing bonus checks and slices of pie. Celebrating with co-workers are, back row, vice president for Sales and Marketing Wally Dias; Operations managing director Dan Morgan; regional director for Airport/Cargo Ops/Asia Brian Wessling; Finance Asia Pacific director Sam Shinohara; and Human Resources regional director Dixon McKinzie.

HAGÅTÑA, Guam—Valentine's Day is a sweet one for Continental Micronesia employees who received yesterday a slice of Continental Airline's record-breaking $158 million in profit sharing.

System-wide, Continental Airlines recognized the outstanding performance of its 45,000 employees yesterday, Feb. 14, by distributing checks and serving slices of pie at more than 200 Continental locations. Continental's profit sharing plan is the most generous in the industry.

Continental Micronesia distributed more than $5 million of the $158 million to its employees yesterday. The significance of that $5 million direct injection of cash equates to over $10 million of economic impact to island communities.

"The hard work of our employees is the reason behind Continental's profitability. In 2007, they focused on outstanding operations performance and are deserving of this bonus," said Continental Micronesia president and CEO Mark Erwin.

Last year, Continental Micronesia employees received $3 million of Continental's $111 million in profit sharing. Last year's distribution of $111 million in profit sharing was the highest of any U.S. carrier. This year's profit sharing is $47 million more than Continental distributed in 2006 and is the largest profit sharing distribution in company history.

"The outstanding performance of our team has once again set us apart from the competition," said Continental Airlines chairman and CEO Larry Kellner.

Five times last year Continental Micronesia paid its employees more than $700,000 in bonuses for on-time operations performances.

Continental Micronesia is Guam's largest private sector employer with a payroll of $90 million dollars annually. The airline contributes $180 million to Guam's economy and employees contribute more than $15 million in taxes to the government of Guam.

Continental Micronesia is headquartered in Guam and operates a Pacific hub from

the A.B. Won Pat International Airport.

For more company information, visit continental.com. ***(Continental)***

New SaipanCell phones for Mettao, Escobar

Nobert Mettao and Divina Escobar were the grand prize and baby grand prize winners of SaipanCell Communication's MITA Travel Garapan grand opening held last Feb. 1.

Mettao was the lucky winner of a spanking new Motorola Razor 2, which SaipanCell marketing representative James K. Lee said is the only one on island.

Ditto for the brand new GSM Nokia N73 given to Escobar after she won the baby grand prize. The Motorola Razor 2 was the grand prize winner of the promotion.

Cellular phones sold like hotcakes during the grand opening of SaipanCell Communication's MITA Travel full service outlet along Beach Road in Garapan during the very first day of the month.

The telecommunication company wetted the appetite of the public by offering great discounts on its products during the ribbon cutting ceremony.

For instance, SaipanCell gave away free cell phones, some with built-in cameras, for customers who snapped up its $39.95 starter kits, which included a SIM card and $20 load.

The widely popular Motorola KRZR also retailed at a low $199.99, while customers were also enticed by SaipanCell's promotion of a $50 prepaid wireless card that comes along with a free Kyocera K112.

A spin-a-wheel gimmick also rewarded patrons with a number of the company's giveaways, ranging from clocks, to backpacks, to T-shirts. ***(Mark Rabago)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Nobert Mettao, middle, receives a spanking new Motorola Razor 2 from SaipanCell Communications marketing representative James K. Lee after he won the grand prize in SaipanCell's MITA Travel Garapan grand opening promotion held last Feb. 1.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Divina Escobar shows off her brand new GSM Nokia N73, which was the baby grand prize of SaipanCell's MITA Travel Garapan grand opening promotion held last Feb. 1. To her left is SaipanCell marketing representative James K. Lee

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Stocks end higher on upbeat sales data

NEW YORK (AP)—Wall Street moved sharply higher Wednesday after the Commerce Department reported an unexpected increase in retail sales last month and eased some concerns about consumers' willingness to spend despite economic uncertainty. The Dow Jones industrials rose nearly 180 points. The Dow rose 178.83, or 1.45 percent, to 12,552.24. The blue chip index finished at its highs of the session. Broader indexes also moved higher. The Standard & Poor's 500 index added 18.35, or 1.36 percent, to 1,367.21, and the Nasdaq composite rose 53.89, or 2.32 percent, to 2,373.93.

WTO rules against China for first time

GENEVA (AP)—The World Trade Organization on Wednesday issued its first official condemnation of Chinese commercial practices, siding with the United States, the European Union and Canada in a dispute over car parts. The WTO found that China was breaking trade rules by taxing imports of auto parts at the same rate as foreign-made finished cars, according to a copy of the ruling's conclusions obtained by The Associated Press. In the sweeping decision, the three-member WTO panel found against China on nearly every point of contention with the U.S., the 27-nation EU and Canada. The panel found that Chinese measures "accord imported auto parts less favorable treatment than like domestic auto parts" or "subject imported auto parts to an internal charge in excess of that applied to like domestic auto parts."

Yahoo exploring alliance with News Corp.

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Yahoo Inc. is discussing a possible Internet partnership with media conglomerate News Corp., its latest effort to repel Microsoft Corp.'s takeover bid or pry a better offer from the unsolicited suitor, a person familiar with the situation said Wednesday. The specifics of the proposed joint venture haven't been worked out, according to the person, who didn't want to be identified because the talks are considered confidential. Both The Wall Street Journal and a prominent blog, TechCrunch, reported that News Corp. is interested in folding its popular online social network, MySpace.com, and other Internet assets into Yahoo.

STOCK Portfolio

ASIAN MARKETS

AUSTRALIA	5,738.300 Up 123.000 (+2.19%)
HONG KONG	23,963.29 Up 793.74 (+3.43%)
JAKARTA	2,660.7439 Up 49.963 (+1.91%)
TOKYO	13,468.63 Up 400.33 (+3.06%)
K. LUMPUR	1,423.15 Up 5.63 (+0.40%)
MANILA	3,211.60 Down 11.75 (-0.36%)
SINGAPORE	3,031.76 Up 82.22 (+2.79%)
SEOUL	1,679.23 Up 47.45 (+2.91%)
BANGKOK	839.25 Up 9.84 (+1.19%)

LEADING INDICATORS

DOW	12,552.24 +178.83
NASDAQ	2,373.93 +53.89
S&P	1,367.21 +18.35

MONEY MARKET

Australian Dollar	1.108
British Pound	0.5096
Canadian Dollar	0.9972
Chinese Renmbi	7.1895
Euro	0.6865
Hong Kong Dollar	7.7999
Indian Rupee	39.728
Indonesian Rupiah	9256
Japanese Yen	108.17
Malaysian Ringgit	3.238
New Zealand Dollar	1.2723
Philippine Peso	40.94
Singapore Dollar	1.4192
South Korean Won	945.1
Swiss Franc	1.1071
Taiwan Dollar	31.698
Thailand Baht	32.115

In U.S. dollar terms

Source: Associated Press

Love on the job can be risky business

By PATRICIA KITCHEN
(C) 2008, NEWSDAY

There are co-workers who meet and fall in love at the office—or, maybe, just have a fling. And then there are married co-workers who meet and fall in love at work—or, maybe, just have a fling.

If the first camp presents ample opportunities for workplace distraction and drama, just think of the dust storms the second camp can kick up—you know, angry spouses showing up in the lobby.

According to the annual Office Romance Survey—just in time for Valentine's Day—48 percent of 945 employees surveyed say they've known of a married colleague who cheated on his or her spouse with someone at work. And 40 percent say they know of a married—or otherwise seriously committed—co-worker who got a little frisky with someone on a business trip. The survey was conducted by Vault.com, a Manhattan-based career Web site.

Here's what relationship expert Robin Gorman Newman wants to know about the findings: "Are people that open? Are they that blatant? Or are they being outed by someone?" She says the findings speak to the unlikelihood of keeping such activity under wraps in the workplace.

And while finding out about single colleagues who are dating one another may generate a little buzz, the involvement of married workers really gets the gossip mill fired up. And, Newman says, it can lead to results such as losing out on a raise or a promotion once the boss finds out—unless, of course, you ARE the boss.

Gorman Newman, founder of www.Lovecoach.com, tells of a job she had at which a married partner was stepping out with a client. When the partner's wife came into the office, "we all wondered if she knew." And when he was all "lovey-dovey" with his wife, Gorman Newman says, she and colleagues thought "you are so full of it."

While workplace dalliances are not among the top "precipitating factors" he sees in divorce cases, Ken Koopersmith, a Long Island family-law attorney, says, "it happens not infrequently." In some cases, two marriages end up being dissolved.

So, if you're married, are expecting a less than sizzling Valentine's Day and are considering making a play for a work colleague, here's some advice from Koopersmith: "Stay the hell away.

"It can give rise to all kinds of complications and disappointments," he says. "It could result in your losing your job, losing friends or losing your spouse. It's not a good idea."

When socializing at work, just be yourself

By LILY GARCIA
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST

Q: "I am a relatively successful female employee in my mid-30s who has always received the highest ratings on performance reviews. Unfortunately, I am also quiet, and this is often interpreted as aloofness. Because this is hurting my career and because I genuinely want my co-workers to feel comfortable around me, I've tried to pinpoint the specific behaviors that bother them, and it basically comes down to insufficient socializing over non-work-related topics. (They admitted that work-related communications are just fine, in terms of information-sharing, collaborative brainstorming, negotiations, etc.)

"I first tried to spend more time talking to others about the subjects that interest them, but the majority of their conversations revolve around gossip, which does not interest me. The topics that interest me do not interest them. So, I started scanning newspapers for discussion topics, brushing up on sports (I don't even like sports), attending more potlucks (after learning that my co-workers were bothered because I attended only two out of three per week) and being more complimentary, but the harder I try, the more uncomfortable and unnatural I feel. Don't extroverts realize how hard it is for introverts to chit-chat? How can I find a way to interact with my peers in a way that makes both them and myself more comfortable? And how do I maintain my professionalism in contexts that feel—to me—unprofessional?"

A: Although you may very well benefit from making a greater effort to socialize at work, you are putting far too much pressure on yourself. As a fellow introvert, I know that it can be painfully hard at times to engage in casual office conversation, especially if it seems trivial or petty. I know the dread of having to mingle at social gatherings and the awkwardness of making small talk with a virtual stranger. But if you polled the people I have worked with, I doubt that many would typecast me as an introvert.

The secret to faking it is to be yourself. Stop scanning the paper for topics. Stop reading about sports, for Pete's sake. You already have interests of your own, and that is what you should be sharing with your co-workers. I do not condone gossip, but part of what your co-workers are accomplishing through their "chit-chat" is bonding. They are talking about themselves so that others in the office might know them better. And you can easily do the same.

Do keep attending the potlucks, but also create opportunities to socialize in a context that feels more comfortable for you. I am guessing that, like me, you are far more at ease socializing one-on-one than in a large group. So try asking individual co-workers out for lunch or coffee. If you can get to know them as individuals in a setting that is more relaxed for you, you will each grow to like the other more.

Finally, don't be afraid at times to just listen. Go to the lunches, hang out by the water cooler, but don't feel like you necessarily have to be talking the entire time. Listening attentively to a co-worker's stories and smiling or laughing along with them also counts. Your co-workers will just be happy that you showed up to the party. Far more happy than if you try to be someone you are not.

$ DOLLARS AND SENSE

Think like a millionaire

By DAVID UFFINGTON
(C) 2008 KING FEATURES SYND., INC.

"365 Ways to Become a Millionaire (Without Being Born One)" is a small book full of gems that may well change the way you think about money. Author Brian Koslow was a self-made millionaire by the age of 31, and what he has to say deserves some attention.

While none of the 365 entries is "the one" that will make you a millionaire, there's something to be said for the apparent philosophy behind the book: 365 ways means that logically you'll read one a day, like flipping through a Page-A-Day calendar. By having a daily reference to money and keeping your thoughts geared toward money, you'll be more inclined to aim toward financial success in your everyday dealings. As the book points out, financial success is grounded in a person's effectiveness.

Or you can read by topic. Broken down into areas such as relationships, time, leadership, entrepreneurialism and credibility, you can flip to a section where you need help.

Here are a few that are especially important:

"Always focus on your primary objective, not the barriers or circumstances that appear to be in your way." By focusing on the negatives, we tend to be weighed down by them. When we aim toward our primary object, that is what is going to get the bulk of our time and attention.

"Make sure you count to 10 before buying a house, plane, car, boat or any other possession that may at some point possess you." Too often, the toys we tell ourselves we need (including expensive homes) end up costing more than we can comfortably pay.

"When you rearrange the letters L I S T E N, what word do you get? Silent." Koslow has a whole section on listening, possibly the most valuable section in the book. Active listening involves learning what others want and gaining their trust. Tied to their trust is your own credibility and reputation: You might think you have the best idea in the world, but until you listen to others, your own ideas will never be listened to. "Listen 85 percent of the time, speak 15 percent," Koslow counsels.

That's good advice for anyone.

"365 Ways" (Penguin Books: reprinted 2008) has been published in five languages since it was first printed in 1999.

Nation

ACROSS THE NATION

Senate votes to ban waterboarding

WASHINGTON (AP)—Congress on Wednesday moved to prohibit the CIA from using waterboarding and other harsh interrogation methods on terror suspects, despite President Bush's threat to veto any measure that limits the agency's interrogation techniques. The prohibition was contained in a bill authorizing intelligence activities for the current year, which the Senate approved on a 51-45 vote. It would restrict the CIA to the 19 interrogation techniques outlined in the Army field manual. That manual prohibits waterboarding, a method that makes an interrogation subject feel he is drowning. The House had approved the measure in December. Wednesday's Senate vote set up a confrontation with the White House, where Bush has promised to veto any bill that restricts CIA questioning.

Booting Marines lands mayor in crossfire

TOLEDO, Ohio (AP)—Turning away a squad of Marine Corps reservists planning a weekend of training downtown has put the city's mayor in the crossfire of veterans. Mayor Carty Finkbeiner told the Marines, based in Grand Rapids, Mich., to turn around when they hit town Friday, saying he didn't want them scaring unsuspecting visitors and office workers. City Council members have sent an apology to the Marines, and the local visitors bureau offered the unit's 200 members a free hotel stay, restaurant gift certificates and a visit to the zoo.

Deputies suspended for wheelchair dump

TAMPA, Fla. (AP)—Four sheriff's deputies have been suspended after purposely tipping a paralyzed man out of his wheelchair onto a jailhouse floor, authorities said. Surveillance footage from Jan. 29 shows Hillsborough County deputy Charlette Marshall-Jones, 44, dumping Brian Sterner out of his wheelchair and searching him on the floor after he was brought in on a warrant after a traffic violation. Sterner, 32, said when he was taken into a booking room and told to stand up, Jones grew agitated when he told her that he could not. "She was irked that I wasn't complying to what she was telling me to do," he told The Tampa Tribune in Tuesday's edition. "It didn't register with her that she was asking me to do something I can't do." Sterner can drive a car but has not been able to walk since a 1994 wrestling accident.

Icy storm blows through Northeast

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP)—A powerful winter storm spread more than a half-foot of snow across parts of the Northeast on Wednesday, closing hundreds of schools and switching off the lights for thousands of homes and businesses. The Maine Legislature called off its session for the day and federal agencies opened two hours late in Washington. The Army's Fort Drum in northern New York state canceled all outdoor physical fitness training. The National Weather Service reported 10 inches of snow in Maine at Auburn and Lisbon Falls, 8.5 inches at Fitchburg, Mass., and up to 6 inches in eastern New York state, where ice was up to a half-inch thick. The storm system had been blamed for at least 15 deaths since Monday.

Man slashes NYC psychologist to death

NEW YORK (AP)—A man hacked a psychologist to death with a meat cleaver at her Upper East Side office and seriously injured another therapist who tried to help her, police said. The search was on Wednesday for the man as police tried to determine whether he was a patient of Kathryn Faughey. She was stabbed to death Tuesday night in the office suite in a bustling neighborhood just blocks from a major hospital complex. Police recovered three knives from the scene, including the cleaver and a 9-inch knife also used in the attack.

Rebate checks in the mail by spring

WASHINGTON (AP)—The checks aren't in the mail, but they will be soon. President Bush signed legislation Wednesday to rush rebates ranging from $300 to $1,200 to millions of people, the centerpiece of government efforts to brace the wobbly economy. First, though, you must file your 2007 tax return.

More than 130 million people are expected to get the rebates, starting around May. Congress, Bush, the Federal Reserve and Wall Street are hoping the money will burn such a hole in people's pockets that they won't be able to resist spending it. And the spending is supposed to give an energizing jolt to a national economy that is in danger of toppling into a recession if it hasn't already.

Whether people actually spend the money remains to be seen. A recent Associated Press-Ipos poll indicates most people have other plans. Forty-five percent said they planned to pay off bills, while 32 percent said they would save or invest it. Only 19 percent said they would spend their rebates.

The measure Bush signed—a $168 billion rescue package passed with lightning speed by Congress last week—includes not only rebates for individuals but also tax breaks for businesses to spur investment in new plants and equipment. That, too, would help bolster U.S. economic activity. The package also contains provisions aimed at helping struggling homeowners clobbered by the housing collapse and the credit crunch refinance into more affordable mortgages.

AP

President Bush, surrounded by members of Congress and Cabinet members, signs the Economic Stimulus Act of 2008, Wednesday, Feb. 13, 2008, in the East Room of the White House in Washington. Standing, front row, from left are, Rep. Charles Rangel, D-N.Y., Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nev., House Minority Whip Roy Blunt of Mo., Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of Calif., House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer of Md., Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell of Ky., and House Minority Leader John Boehner of Ohio.

The emergency plan marked a rare moment of cooperation among political rivals fearful that an ailing economy during an election year would invite voter retaliation.

Bush, who called the measure "a booster shot for our economy," praised the bipartisan cooperation. "We have come together on a single mission—and that is to put the people's interests first," he said.

Clinton's edge slips with whites, women

WASHINGTON (AP)—Hillary Rodham Clinton's crushing losses in Maryland and Virginia highlight an erosion in what had been solid advantages among women, whites and older and working-class voters. While this week's results can be explained by those states' relatively large numbers of blacks and well-educated residents—who tend to be Barack Obama supporters—her presidential campaign could be doomed if the trends continue.

Clinton is holding onto some of her supporters who are largely defined by race and often by level of education, such as low-income white workers and older white women, exit polls of voters show. She's been losing other blocs, again stamped by personal characteristics, such as blacks, men and young people both black and white, and better-educated whites.

The latest defeats have slowed the one-time favorite's political momentum at a bad time. With Obama winning eight straight contests and easily outdistancing her in money raising, she must now endure three weeks until primaries in Texas and Ohio that she hopes will resurrect her campaign.

Clinton's losses have also enabled Obama to take a slight lead in their crucial fight for convention delegates. With 2,025 needed to clinch the nomination at the party's Denver gathering in August, Obama has 1,224 delegates to Clinton's 1,198, according to the latest count by The Associated Press.

Before this year's presidential contests began, Obama was running consistently behind his rival in the polls. The Illinois senator was mostly attracting upper-echelon whites, young people and about half of black voters—resembling the coalitions that sealed defeat for past non-establishment Democratic candidates such as Gary Hart and Bill Bradley.

Ethics panel says Craig acted improperly

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Senate Ethics Committee said Wednesday that Idaho Sen. Larry Craig acted improperly in connection with a men's room sex sting last year and had brought discredit on the Senate.

In a letter to the Republican senator, the ethics panel said Craig's attempt to withdraw his guilty plea after his arrest at a Minneapolis airport was an effort to evade legal consequences of his own actions.

Craig's actions constitute "improper conduct which has reflected discreditably on the Senate," the letter said.

In an e-mailed statement, Craig told The Associated Press he disagreed with the ethics panel's action.

"While I am disappointed and strongly disagree with the conclusions reached by the Senate Ethics Committee, from the outset I have encouraged the committee to act in a timely fashion and they have done so. I will continue to serve the people of Idaho," he said.

Craig

The six members of the committee—three Democrats and three Republicans—told Craig they believed he "committed the offense to which you pled guilty" and that "you entered your plea knowingly, voluntarily and intelligently."

The panel said Craig only tried to remove his guilty plea after his attempts to avoid public disclosure had failed.

"Your claims to the court ... to the effect that your guilty plea resulted from improper pressure or coercion, or that you did not, as a legal matter, know what you were doing when you pled guilty do not appear credible," the letter said.

The panel also said Craig should have received permission from the ethics panel before using campaign funds to pay his legal bills. Craig, who is not running for re-election, has spent more than $213,000 in campaign money for legal expense and public relations work in the wake of his arrest and conviction last summer.

Doc gets 18 months for removing prints

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP)—A plastic surgeon who replaced the fingerprints of a man involved in a drug ring with skin from the bottom of his feet was sentenced Wednesday to 18 months in prison.

U.S. District Judge Yvette Kane called the crime "horrific" when she imposed the sentence on Dr. Jose Covarrubias.

Covarrubias, a U.S. citizen who lived in the border town of Nogales, Ariz., and practiced in Mexico, pleaded guilty Nov. 1 to a federal charge of harboring and concealing a fugitive.

He apologized to Kane for his conduct, and said he had learned his lesson.

Covarrubias, 50, has been held in Adams County Jail for about 10 months and can be released in eight months. After that, he faces three years probation.

Covarrubias' lawyer, Joseph Metz, said the sentence was fair.

The case was bizarre even to prosecutors, who didn't believe the stories of drug ring operatives without fingerprints—until Marc George was arrested in September 2005 at the Nogales border crossing, bandaged and limping badly from the painful procedure.

Covarrubias was indicted in May by a grand jury in Harrisburg. Prosecutors say the drug ring moved cash and drugs from Tucson and elsewhere and distributed more than a ton of it in central Pennsylvania, Philadelphia and other areas.

Asia

Timorese president walked into gunfight

DILI, East Timor (AP)—The rebels jumped from two cars, firing machine guns as they stormed the compound of President Jose Ramos-Horta. "Traitor! Traitor!" they shouted, hunting for the Nobel Peace Prize winner.

In one of the most detailed accounts yet of Monday's assassination attempt, a guard described how he killed fugitive rebel commander Alfredo Reinado before the president returned from an early morning walk on the beach.

"I shouted Alfredo's name and then opened fire at his head with my machine gun because he was wearing a bulletproof vest," the guard told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity because he is prohibited from talking to the media about the attack.

"I fired many times, I don't know how many times," said the guard, who was back on duty Tuesday in his uniform.

But gunmen lying in a ditch then shot the president in the chest and stomach.

Along with a separate strike against the prime minister an hour later, the events plunged East Timor into fresh crisis just six years after it voted to break free from decades of brutal Indonesian rule.

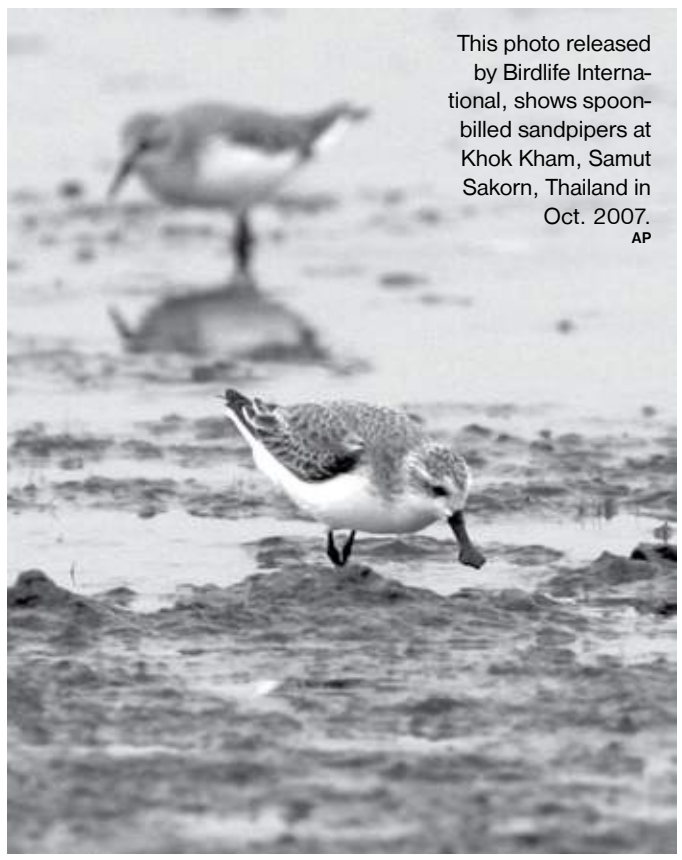
Doctors on Wednesday said Ramos-Horta—who won a Nobel Peace Prize for his nonviolent campaign against the 24-year occupation—was stable and recovering well from gunshot wounds, but remained in "extremely serious" condition at an Australian hospital.

Parliament extended a 48-hour state of emergency by 10 days until Feb. 23 due to concerns about more unrest. Funerals for the rebels will be held Thursday and plans were under way to issue arrest warrants for 18 suspects in the shootings.

The attack on Ramos-Horta was led by Reinado, who was wanted on murder charges for his role in a 2006 surge of violence that left dozens dead. A raid on his mountain base by Australian troops killed five of his supporters, but Reinado escaped.

Rare sandpipers found in Myanmar

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP)—Eighty-four spoon-billed sandpipers have been discovered in a coastal stretch of Myanmar, offering hope for saving the endangered birds, a conservation group said Thursday.



This photo released by Birdlife International, shows spoon-billed sandpipers at Khok Kham, Samut Sakorn, Thailand in Oct. 2007.
AP

The discovery in early February comes only months after Russian researchers reported that numbers of the tiny birds—with speckled brow feathers and a distinctive spoon-shaped bill—had dropped 70 percent in the past few years in their breeding sites in Siberia and none had been seen this year in their traditional wintering sites in Bangladesh, Britain-based conservation group BirdLife International said.

The World Conservation Union lists the bird as endangered with only 200 to 300 pairs left in the wild.

The discovery of 84 birds wintering in Myanmar—only one of which appears to have come from Siberia—raises the prospect of breeding grounds elsewhere, BirdLife said. The birds' migration route takes them from Siberia down through Japan, North Korea, South Korea, mainland China and Taiwan, to their main wintering grounds in South Asia.

"This is an important piece of the jigsaw," Simba Chan, senior conservation manager at BirdLife's Asia Division, said in a statement. "If present trends continue, the spoon-billed sandpiper faces extinction in the next few years. If we are to save the species, we need to identify and conserve not only its breeding sites, but its migration stopover sites and wintering grounds too."

AP

Philippine National Police Chief Director Gen. Avelino Razon, center standing, Police Supt. Paul Mascarinas, left standing, take their oaths at the resumption of the Senate corruption inquiry that has implicated President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's husband, Monday, Feb. 11, 2008 in Manila, Philippines. The inquiry has shifted to the alleged abduction of star witness Rodolfo Lozada Jr., seated right, following his return from an alleged official trip abroad.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Malaysian PM calls early elections

PUTRAJAYA, Malaysia (AP)—Malaysia's prime minister on Wednesday announced early general elections that will test his declining popularity amid complaints about inflation, crime and ethnic tensions. Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said Malaysia's constitutional monarch had endorsed the dissolution of Parliament and that the Election Commission would soon set a date for the vote. Elections must be conducted within 60 days after Parliament is dissolved, but typically are held sooner than that. Abdullah led his National Front coalition to a landslide victory in the last elections in 2004, when it won 90 percent of parliamentary seats.

Italian soldier killed in Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—An Italian soldier was killed in an ambush Wednesday while he was distributing food and clothes to civilians, Italy's Defense Ministry said in Rome. Meanwhile, roadside bombs struck Afghan security forces in two separate incidents, killing seven people and wounding five, officials said. Italian Premier Romano Prodi condemned the attack east of Kabul, saying that the dead soldier and his party were ambushed while aiding in Afghanistan's reconstruction. Another soldier was wounded, the ministry said.

China denies poison at dumpling factory

BEIJING (AP)—China's top quality watchdog on Wednesday dismissed reports that factory workers could have deliberately poisoned dumplings blamed for sickening at least 10 people in Japan. Investigations by the agency and police have found nothing unusual at the Tianyang Food Processing Ltd. dumpling factory in Hebei province, said Wei Chuanzhong, deputy head of the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection, and Quarantine.

Indonesia issues tsunami alert

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—Indonesia briefly issued a tsunami alert Thursday after a strong earthquake rocked the east of the country. The country's geophysics agency said the quake had a preliminary magnitude of 6.6, while the U.S. Geological Survey put the initial magnitude at 5.9. The quake struck 170 miles southwest of the Maluku island chain at a depth of six miles. The Indonesian agency initially put out a tsunami warning but retracted it after no waves came.

Aid group decries Sri Lankan casualties

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP—The number of civilian casualties in Sri Lanka's raging civil war has reached "appalling levels," the Red Cross said Wednesday. Many of the victims have been children on their way to or from school, according to Toon Vandenhove, the head of the local International Committee of the Red Cross. The violence has reportedly killed more than 180 civilians and injured almost 270 in the first six weeks of the year, the aid agency said.

RP forces on alert ahead of anti-government protests

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Philippine security forces were on high alert Thursday amid concerns that communist rebels planned to infiltrate protests to demand the resignation of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo over mounting corruption allegations.

Military spokesman Capt. Carlo Ferrer said intelligence reports indicated the rebels planned to disrupt an opposition-led rally Friday "to create confusion and chaos." The rebels vowed Wednesday to intensify attacks to weaken the government, but they have largely refrained from assaults that could hurt civilians during their four-decade insurgency.

Opposition leaders dismissed the military's announcement as a ploy to discourage crowds from joining the protest in Makati, Manila's financial district.

Political tensions have increased since the dramatic emergence last week of a corruption witness, former government consultant Rodolfo Lozada Jr., who linked a former elections chief and Arroyo's husband to an allegedly overpriced US$330 million (€225 million) government broadband contract in Senate testimony. Both men have denied the allegations.

RP rebels pledge to intensify attacks

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Communist guerrillas vowed Wednesday to step up attacks aimed at removing Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo from power amid a corruption scandal and planned protests to demand her resignation.

The underground Communist Party of the Philippines also called on anti-Arroyo forces to launch all forms of protest to bring down her regime, a statement said.

"The revolutionary armed forces ... have been instructed ... to further intensify tactical offensives in the next few weeks and months to help further weaken the Arroyo regime and contribute significantly to its ouster," the rebels said.

The Senate has been investigating a corruption-tainted US$330 million (€225 million) government broadband contract with China's ZTE Corp. The former elections chief and Arroyo's husband have been accused of involvement. Both have denied the allegations.

The Senate testimony "bared the immensity of the Arroyo regime's capacity for greed, perfidy, malevolence and fascist abuse of state power," the guerrillas' statement said.

World

Top Hezbollah militant killed in Syria

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP)—One of the world's most wanted and elusive terrorists, Imad Mughniyeh, was killed in a car bombing in Syria nearly 15 years after dropping from sight. The one-time Hezbollah security chief was the suspected mastermind of attacks that killed hundreds of Americans in Lebanon and of the brutal kidnappings of Westerners.

Mughniyeh

The Lebanese Shiite militant group Hezbollah and its top ally, Iran, blamed Israel on Wednesday for the assassination. Israel denied any role.

Mughniyeh was also on the FBI's list of most wanted terrorists, and the U.S. State Department had offered a $5 million reward for information leading to his arrest or conviction. He was indicted in the U.S. for his role in planning the 1985 hijacking of a TWA airliner in which a U.S. Navy diver was killed.

The United States welcomed Mughniyeh's death.

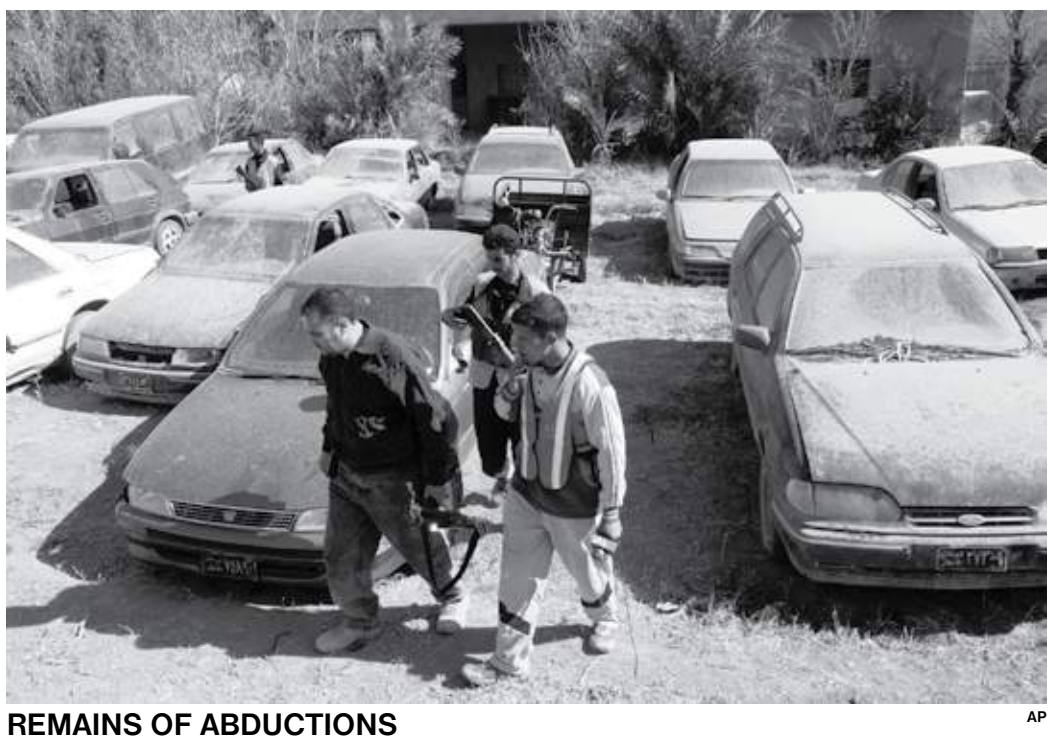
"The world is a better place without this man in it," State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said. "One way or the other, he was brought to justice."

The hijacking was the only attack on Americans for which Mughniyeh was charged, but he carried out or directed a series of terrorist spectaculars aimed at the United States and Jewish targets.

Mughniyeh's death was the latest in a series of blows to major terror figures in recent weeks. Abu Laith al-Libi, a senior al-Qaida leader, was killed in Pakistan in late January by a missile fired from a U.S. drone. This week, Pakistani security forces critically wounded and captured Mansour Dadullah, a top Taliban figure, in a firefight near the Afghan border.

But Mughniyeh, a Shiite Muslim not known to be connected to the Sunni al-Qaida or Taliban, harkened back to an earlier era of terror. A secretive, underground operator whose name was not even known for years, he was one of the first to turn Islamic militancy's weapons against the United States in the 1980s.

Mughniyeh emerged during the turmoil of Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war, rising to become Hezbollah's security chief, and the dramatic suicide bombings he is accused of engineering in Beirut were some of the deadliest against Americans until al-Qaida's Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.


AP

REMAINS OF ABDUCTIONS

Members of the Awakening Council allied with the American forces stand on a lot where some 30 abandoned cars have been discovered just south of Baghdad, Wednesday, Feb. 13, 2008, The cars belonged to people who were abducted and later killed by al-Qaida, a local Awakening Council official said.

Rape is weapon in Kenyan violence

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP)—Looting, arson and murder have become hallmarks of Kenya's conflict over a disputed presidential election. Another, less talked about tactic in the violence that has degenerated into ethnic clashes: rape.

Dr. Joseph Osoo, who runs a tin-roofed, two-room clinic in Nairobi's Mathare slum, said he was overwhelmed by the number of women and girls who came for treatment and by the brutality of their ordeals.

"During the days immediately after the election I was treating up to 45 rape victims a day," he said. Usually, he treats one rape victim a week.

One 10-year-old girl suffered a ruptured cervix as the result of her attack, another woman was cleaved across the top of her thighs with a machete and left to bleed to death, he said.

"What is unusual is that most cases are gang rapes, which I have never seen before," he said.

Lucy Kiama, who heads the Gender Violence Recovery Center at Nairobi Women's Hospital, said she also has seen "a huge increase in incidences of sexual violence in the post-election period."

The hospital treated 135 sexually assaulted women and children—one just 2 years old—in the three weeks after the Dec. 27 election that the opposition accuses the president of stealing.

Kiama said the numbers may be even higher. The general violence and lack of transport during skirmishes mean many victims never make it to the hospital to report rape, she said.

UK cops examine Georgian tycoon's suspicious death

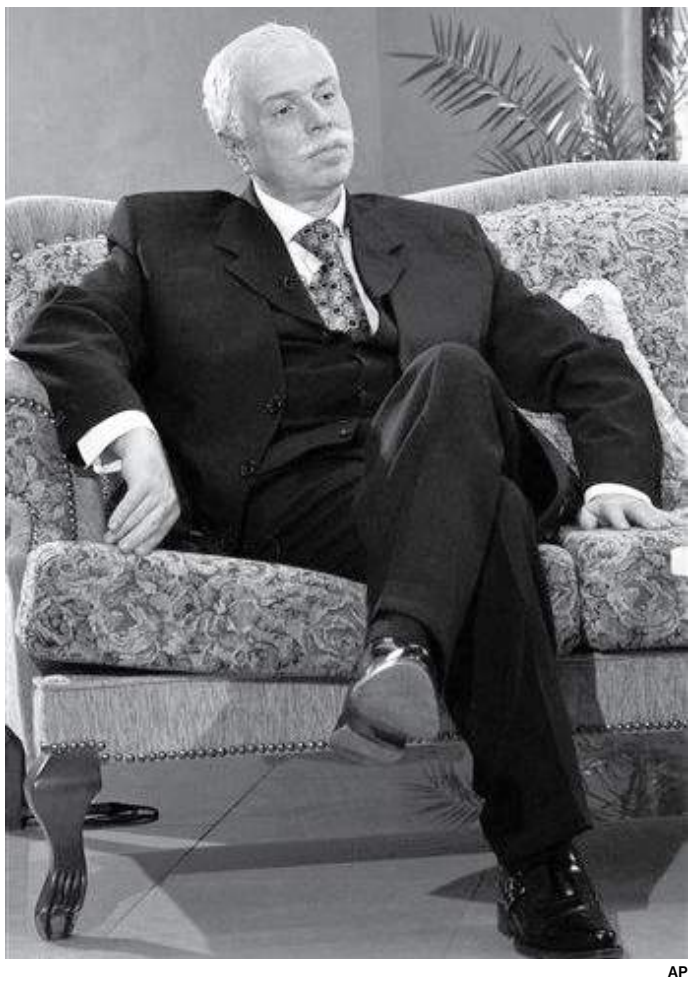
LONDON (AP)—The richest man in the former Soviet state of Georgia was found dead in his mansion near London less than two months after claiming he was the target of an assassination plot for helping lead a protest movement against his homeland's government.

British police said Wednesday a major crimes unit was investigating the death late Tuesday of 52-year-old billionaire Badri Patarkatsishvili, which they were treating as suspicious pending an autopsy.

Patarkatsishvili built his fortune in Russia after the break-up of the Soviet Union through a partnership with Boris Berezovsky—another self-exile who is one of Russian President Vladimir Putin's most vocal foes.

His death drew comparisons to the 2006 radiation poisoning in London of ex-Russian security agent Alexander Litvinenko. Moscow's refusal to hand over the primary suspect, Andrei Lugovoi, has strained relations between Britain and Russia.

Police found no trace of radiation at the Georgian's mansion, Britain's Press Association reported, citing police sources.


AP

Georgian tycoon Badri Patarkatsishvili is seen at home in Tbilisi in this Oct. 23, 2003, file photo.

Danish papers reprint Muhammad cartoon

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP)—Danish newspapers reprinted cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad in a gesture of solidarity Wednesday after police revealed a plot to kill the creator of the caricature that sparked deadly riots in the Muslim world.

Danish Muslims said they would seek to avoid a repeat of the violence two years ago—but with a rightwing Dutch lawmaker planning to air a movie that condemns Islam as fascist, Europe pondered the possibility of a new cycle of turmoil.

"I just don't want go through this again," said Mohammed Shafiq of the Ramadhan Foundation, a Muslim educational group in London. Shafiq said he has written a protest letter to the Danish ambassador in London.

Other Muslim groups echoed his sentiments, saying they believed the Danish papers were seeking unnecessarily to rekindle the fiery debate over free speech and Islam that engulfed Europe during the uproar over the cartoons in 2006.

Some experts said that discussion never went away—it just drifted off the editorial pages of Europe's dailies.

WORLD BRIEFS

Lawmakers pass provincial election law

BAGHDAD (AP)—Parliament cleared the way Wednesday for provincial elections this year that could give Sunnis a stronger voice and usher in vast changes to Iraq's power structure. The new law—which set the vote for Oct. 1—is one of the most sweeping reforms pushed by the Bush administration and signals that Iraq's politicians finally, if grudgingly, may be ready for small steps toward reconciliation. Passage of benchmark reforms on healing the country's sectarian and ethnic rifts—along with a reduction in violence—were the primary goals of the 30,000-strong U.S. troop increase that President Bush ordered early last year.

Kenya election chief: rigging possible

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP)—Kenya's electoral chief compared the president to a notoriously corrupt predecessor on Wednesday and acknowledged the December election may have been rigged. His remarks came as negotiators sequestered themselves at a luxury game lodge to hammer out a deal aimed at ending weeks of bloodshed over the disputed presidential vote. More than 1,000 Kenyans have died and some 600,000 have fled their homes. Opposition leader Raila Odinga accuses President Mwai Kibaki of stealing the Dec. 27 election, and domestic and international observers have said there was rigging—possibly by both sides. Odinga and Kibaki have been under pressure to share power as a solution.

Diplomats: Iran processes uranium gas

VIENNA, Austria (AP)—Iran's new generation of advanced centrifuges have begun processing small quantities of the gas that can be used to make the fissile core of nuclear warheads, diplomats told The Associated Press on Wednesday. The diplomats emphasized that the centrifuges were working with minute amounts of uranium gas. One diplomat said Tehran has set up only 10 of the machines—far too few to make enriched uranium in the quantities needed for an industrial-scale energy or weapons program. Still, the information revealed details of the state of Iran's experiments with its domestically developed IR-2 centrifuges, which can churn out enriched uranium at more than double the rate of the machines that now form the backbone of the Iranian nuclear project.

Plane crashes in Armenia, no deaths

YEREVAN, Armenia (AP)—A plane carrying 21 people has crashed on takeoff from Armenia's capital, but there were no deaths reported, the head of the country's civil aviation authority said. The plane, a Canadair CRJ-100, was heading for Minsk, Belarus, when it flipped over on the runway at Zvartnots Airport and burst into flames, Avtiom Movsesian said. He said there were 18 passengers and three crew members aboard. He did not immediately know the airline to which the plane belonged, but Russian news reports said it was a plane of Belarus' Belavia Airlines.

Science & Technology

Tech-stiles: Clothes with power

AP

This photo released by Georgia Tech University shows professor Zhong Lin Wang holding a microfiber nanogenerator composed of a pair of entangled fibers.

BOSTON (AP)—Someday, your shirt might be able to power your iPod—just by doing the normal stuff expected of a shirt.

Scientists have developed a way to generate electricity by jostling fabric with unbelievably tiny wires woven inside, raising the prospect of textiles that produce power simply by being stretched, rustled or ruffled by a breeze.

The research, described in Thursday's edition of the journal Nature, combines the precision of ultra-small nanotechnology with the elegant principle known as the piezoelectric effect, in which electricity is generated when pressure is applied to certain materials.

While the piezoelectric effect has been understood at least as far back as the 19th century, it is getting creative new looks now, as concerns about energy supplies are inspiring quests for alternative power sources.

For example, a Japanese railway has experimented with mats, placed under turnstiles, that translate the pressure from thousands of commuters' footfalls into usable power. French scientists have proposed capturing energy from raindrops hitting a structure with piezoelectric properties.

For the research described in Nature, Zhong Lin Wang and colleagues at the Georgia Institute of Technology covered individual fibers of fabric with nanowires made of zinc oxide. These wires are only 50 nanometers in diameter—1,800 times thinner than a human hair.

Alternating fibers are coated with gold. As one strand of the fabric is stretched against another, the nanowires on one fiber rub against the gold-coated ones on the other, like the teeth of two bottle brushes. The resulting tension and pressure generates a piezoelectric charge that is captured by the gold and can be fed into a circuit.

The allure of the idea is that it doesn't take unusual movement to generate usable electricity. Pretty much anything someone does while wearing a piezoelectric shirt would be productive.

"The beauty of this work is that if you have wind, or you have sonic waves, or you have vibrations, that works for you," Wang said. "You do not need a very large force for that."

Wang has coaxed the wires to grow around strands of yarn in a few square millimeters of fabric, but has not made sizable pieces yet. But he estimates that one square meter of nanowire-infused fabric would produce around 80 milliwatts of electricity, enough to recharge portable music players.

HELP FILE

By ROB PEGORARO
(c) 2008, The Washington Post

Q. I use Windows' "Send To" right-click menu as a quick way to copy a file to a flash drive or attach it to an e-mail. How do I get rid of all its irrelevant options?

A. This menu—one of the items that appear when you right-click on a file in Windows—can become a dumping ground for shortcuts left there by other programs.

Cleaning it up takes a little digging, though, because the folder that hides these shortcuts is itself hidden. In Windows XP or Vista, type "shell:sendto" into the address-bar space at the top of your documents window. (If you don't see that space in XP, go to the View menu, select Toolbars and then select "Address Bar.") You should then see a folder that lists files named after places and programs on your computer, not all of which you may care about.

For example, Windows puts links here to create a desktop shortcut or make a compressed archive from a selected file. Many third-party programs, such as disc-burning utilities and the Skype Internet-phone program, also leave traces here.

Delete the shortcuts you don't want, and you'll have a simpler and shorter "Send To" menu.

■■■

Q. When I try to open iTunes on my PC, it says it cannot run because it has detected a problem with the audio configuration, and then quits.

A. You need to reload QuickTime, the Apple media-playback software on which iTunes relies. Download a fresh copy (apple.com/quicktime), install that, and you should be fine.

If I may offer a suggestion to the iTunes developers: How about writing an error message that tells people how to fix this problem? The vague notice that users see now offers zero guidance about what to do, not even a link to the tech-support article on Apple's site explaining this issue.

Off the Wall

Lottery winner makes great mistake

BAD AXE, Mich. (AP)—Donald Ertman got a little agitated when he found out he'd have to make the 150-mile trip to Lansing to collect his lottery winnings. All that for $150, he complained.

Then the owner of the store that sold Ertman the $1 Mega Millions ticket set him straight: It was worth not $150, but a cool quarter of a million.

"I didn't believe him—not at first," Ertman told The Bay City Times.

The 71-year-old laid-off factory worker bought the ticket in late December at the Bad Axe Party Store & BP Gas Station, and walked around with it for six days without realizing it was worth $250,000.

He must have written down the numbers wrong when he saw them on TV, he said.

Ertman was speechless when store owner Eli Kabban told him what he really had, and his wife, Rosalie "Penny" Ertman, broke down in tears of joy when she learned the news.

"We're the typical poor senior citizens, and our income from Social Security is not a lot," she said.

The Ertmans, who live in Sanilac County's Minden Township in Michigan's Thumb, said they spend about $7 per week on lottery tickets. They remained anonymous until Monday.

OFFBEAT BRIEFS

Boston man receives postcard from 1929

BOSTON (AP)—The message on the postcard to a "Miss Margaret McDonald" was short. Its path to the intended address was much longer. Nearly 79 years after it was sent, a postcard of Yellowstone National Park's Tower Falls arrived in a Boston mailbox recently with the one-word message, "Greetings." Its intended recipient had long since left the Victorian on Sparhawk Street, and the sender was not identified by name. Michael Cioffi was shocked to find the card dated June 1929 in his mail. He says the McDonald family did own his house for generations, but he doesn't think there is anyone left in the family to pass the postcard to. A U.S. Postal Service spokesman says it's impossible to know what happened with the card. It somehow got into the mail and was sent with a one cent stamp from Seattle earlier this year.

Man charged in staged sympathy shooting

DOTHAN, Ala. (AP)—A Hartford man has been charged with two misdemeanors for allegedly staging his own shooting, which put him in the hospital, to get sympathy from family members. Charles Gregory Hatcher was indicted by a Geneva County grand jury on charges of obstruction of justice and giving false information to law enforcement officers, both Class A misdemeanors. He turned himself into the Geneva County Jail last week and was released on $1,500 bond. Police found Hatcher in a cotton field with a bullet wound on his back and another on the back of his leg on Dec. 3. He spent several days in the hospital. Adams said Hatcher threatened an employee with firing if he didn't shoot him. Hartford Police Chief Nick Finer has said Hatcher staged the shooting to gain sympathy from family members.

It was a falling moose. I swear it was!

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP)—Alaska State Troopers see plenty of hazards, but Trooper Howard Peterson was nearly felled by a new one: falling moose. Peterson was driving Feb. 2 on the Seward Highway south of Anchorage when something big and black fell out of the sky about 20 feet in front of his patrol car. "Falling rock!" he thought, ready to steer clear if it bounced onto the highway. The thing didn't roll or shatter. It turned out to be a moose that fell from cliffs next to the highway. Drivers often see Dall sheep on the cliffs but rarely moose. Peterson estimates the animal fell 150 feet or more. It was windy that night, Peterson said, and a gust may have startled the moose into a fatal fall.

Error puts horse ad in food classifieds

AKRON, Mich. (AP)—Kristen DeGroat just wanted to sell her horse to another animal lover, but her ad ended up under "Good Things to Eat" in the classified sections of two newspapers. About a third of the 60 or so calls she received were from people interested in buying horse meat. "It's been enough to turn your stomach," said DeGroat, who eventually sold her 3-year-old mare, Foxy, to a man who wanted a live horse for his grandchildren. DeGroat's ad, offering the registered pinto for $200 or the best offer, was intended to run Sunday and Monday under the classified ad heading for horses and stables in The Saginaw News and The Bay City Times. However, human error landed the ad under the food heading in the classified sections of both newspapers. The papers, which have a jointly run classified ad department, corrected the mistake.

Police post callers get exciting message

BRIDGEPORT, Michigan (AP)—People calling a Michigan state police post got an unexpected pitch for phone sex. Calls to the Bridgeport post's main number were met Wednesday morning with a recorded message saying, "Indulge yourself with the most exciting conversation imaginable." That was followed by a telephone number for a phone sex line, The Saginaw News reported. The phones were working properly by midmorning, Sgt. Alan Renz said. The mix-up was an "internal issue that has nothing to do with the phone company" and an investigation is underway, he told the newspaper.

Meth deposited in ATM, woman jailed

BREMERTON, Wash. (AP)—Credit unions accept deposits—just not of methamphetamine. A woman who allegedly dropped an envelope containing money and a bag of meth at a Kitsap Credit Union was arrested and charged with drug possession, according to court documents. A bank employee reported the deposit to police, who contacted the 18-year-old customer. Officers said she might have mistakenly included the bag when she got money out of her pocket for the deposit.

Woman, 89, uses ax to get back home

DURANGO, Colo. (AP)—Accidentally locked out of her home and stuck in the bitter cold, Geraldine "Gerry" Palmer took matters into her own hands. An ax, to be more specific. Palmer, who turns 90 this weekend, said a sliding glass door locked behind her Saturday after she went outside to rearrange some things that had gotten wet on the patio. Snow had formed a pile about 7 feet high between her and the yard, so she had no escape. So Palmer picked up an old ax she had once used to chop wood and broke into her own home. "I had to bang the glass four times with the ax before it broke," she said. After smashing the glass in the sliding patio door, she reached inside and unlock it.

Life & Style

Kids compete in 2nd Singing Superstar tilt

Top left, all contestants in the semi-finals round of the Saipan Singing Superstar pose with the judges, who are standing in the rear, from left, Carlene Tanerio, Jari Voultinainen, John Jenkins, and Jenny Aguon.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Top, the contestants in the semi-finals round of the Saipan Singing Superstar pose with their certificates of participation during the event held at the lobby of Saipan Grand Hotel on Friday, Feb. 8, 2008.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Left, the top three winners in the 4-to-9 years old category are, from left, Miguel Andrei Aninon, Lizelle Salanga, and Erika Tubera.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The semi-finals round of the Saipan Singing Superstar was held at the lobby of Saipan Grand Hotel on Friday, Feb. 8, 2008.

Criteria for judging were 70 percent musicality and 30 percent through text voting.

The musicality aspect was decided by a panel of judges composed of John Jenkins, Pop Music Grand finalist; Jari Voultinainen, teacher from Ladera International School; Jenny Aguon of Stellar Marianas, and Carlene Tanerio, PTI Marketing Manager.

Top three winners were announced. They are (ranking not in order): Erika Tubera, Miguel Andrei Aninon, and Lizelle Salanga.

They will compete again on Feb. 29, 2008 to find out who will be the Champion and the two runners up based on the following criteria: 50 percent text vote and 50 percent musicality.

PTI text voting is still on going and can be viewed on line via www.pticom.com/txtvoteresult/.

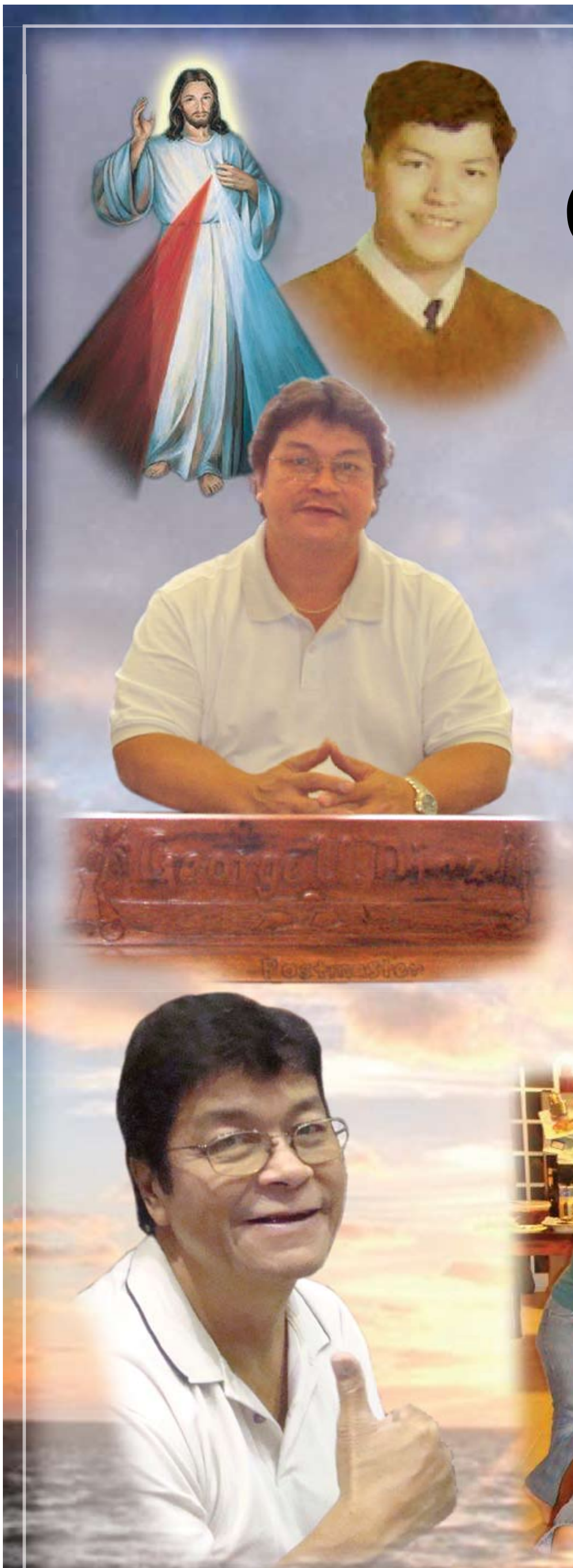
Eliminated contestants can still be part of the PTI text vote and is eligible to be a PTI Text Star. The five other contestants for the 4-to-9 years old category that joined last Friday's contest were Mozelle Campo, Arriane Antonio, John Huevos, Judy Anne Sanches, and Louibelle Lavetoria.

Today, Feb. 15, 2008, the semi-finals for the 10-to-13 years old will be held, also at the Lobby of Saipan Grand Hotel during the Friday Food Fair. The event will be hosted again by Brad Ruszala.

For inquiries, call Oscar Yema at 285-66-16. ***(PR)***

The contestants pose with even host, Brad Ruszala of PTI.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



In Loving Memory

George Untalan Diaz

October 8, 1950 • February 12, 2008

Familian Gayegu
from Barrigada, Guam was called home by God at the age 57.

In his passing, George now joins his Parents: Jose Diaz Diaz and Tomasa Adriano Untalan Diaz; and **Parents-in-law**: Francisco Duenas Flores and Maria Asuncion Romana Ada Torres Flores; **Brother-in-law**: Felix Manuel Torres Flores.

George will be held in loving memory by his loving wife of 36 years: Evelyn Torres Flores Diaz; **Children and Family**: Geolyn D. and Neil Egurrola, children Camarin Teresa, Maria Teresa, Jose Ignacio, Francisco Ignacio; George Jr. and Therese Diaz, children, Jarrod Ray, Geon Tristen, Jonah Keoki; Joseph F. Diaz, son David John; Jeremiah F. Diaz; Geraldine F. Diaz; Jude F. Diaz; Sisters and Spouse: Emiliana D. and David Paulino; Alfonsina D. and Roque Cruz; Marilyn U. Diaz; Elizabeth D. and Joe Rosario; **Brothers/Sisters-in-law**: Francisco and Ana Flores; Catherine F. and Crispin DeLeon Guerrero; John and Ladonna Flores; Joseph and Alva Flores; Margaret Flores; Donald and Shirlina Flores; Rosie and Juan Takai; and **numerous cousins (whom he calls sisters and brothers), nephews, nieces & friends.**

Mass is being said daily at 6:00 am, followed by evening rosary at 7:00 pm at Mount Carmel Cathedral in Chalan Kanoa.

Last respects will be held on Monday, February 18th, at Mount Carmel Cathedral in Chalan Kanoa beginning at 9:00 am. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 1:00 pm after which he will be laid to rest at the Mount Carmel Cemetery in Chalan Kanoa.

Hollywood punches back in as strike ends

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Writers have a reputation as master procrastinators, yet they eagerly faced the blank page Wednesday as Hollywood sputtered back to life after a punishing 100-day strike.

One day after the Writers Guild of America voted to end the walkout, writers on idled TV shows were back at the studios, reviewing projects with executives or pestering their agents to set up meetings. Agents were pitching, producers were assessing how to resume interrupted projects, and the little guys who keep the dream-factory engines running were just glad to be back at work.

"It's back to school with all the trepidation of, 'Do you remember how to do your job? And did you forget the characters' name?'" said Eddie Gorodetski, a writer for "Two and a Half Men." "I want to forget all the strike stuff and just make people laugh."

"We, like every other writer in town, have a million calls in to our agents and managers to see what's next," said Brian Sawyer, who with partner Gregg Rossen had sold a sitcom pilot to Fox before the strike began Nov. 5.

AP

Patrick Varrone, president of Writers Guild of America West, announces the the strike against the Hollywood studios is over after the union members voted in favor of ending the 3-month long strike at Writers Guild Theater in Beverly Hills, Calif., Tuesday, Feb. 12, 2008.

Amid the relief, however, was caution: The Screen Actors Guild could go on strike after its contract expires June 30.

"Heralding that the strike is over is a half-truth because we have the Screen Actors Guild," said producer Peter Guber, former head of Columbia Pictures, current chairman of the Mandalay Entertainment Group and co-host of AMC's "Shootout." "The studios, unless they're going to start production in the next 10 days so they can finish it before June, aren't going to start the pictures."

The strike reduced prime-time TV to reruns and reality shows and forced the late-night comics to write their own material. For shows that went into reruns, producers and writers began meeting to figure out how much of the season they could salvage and how they would meet tight deadlines to write and shoot new episodes.

Dates were announced Wednesday for some series to return to the air. Among them were "How I Met Your Mother," "Two and a Half Men" and "The Big Bang Theory" on March 17; and "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation" on April 3.

Rainn Wilson, a Writers Guild member and co-star of "The Office," said he was hearing that everyone on the show will report back on March 10 to shoot six more episodes.

Early on, the strike was a hiatus from the daily grind for some. By Tuesday night's overwhelming vote to end the walkout, it was clear they were eager to get back to work.

"The break has been long enough," Wilson said. "Everyone slyly around December was like, `Actually, this is kind of cool.' Then it was January, February, you know, so we're ready to get back."

Writers for "CSI: NY" were back in their CBS conference room in Studio City, tossing around ideas for two episodes they need to write from scratch in the next two weeks, about half the time they normally would need.

Movie lovers resembles Putin, wife

MOSCOW (AP)—Out on DVD for Valentine's Day across Russia is a heartwarming drama about a man and a woman who love each other and their country—and who bear an uncanny resemblance to Vladimir Putin and his wife, Lyudmila.

Just when it seemed like the Russian president's public image had been burnished to a spotless shine by state television, along comes a film that appears to cast the steely former spy in a softer light—as smitten suitor, loving husband and dedicated dad.

While acknowledging "many similarities" with Putin, producer Anatoly Voropayev coyly claims the lead character in "The Kiss is Off the Record" is based on a "collective image," not the president himself.

"We believe that since today we are not ashamed of our leader, why not make heroes who are like him?" Voropayev told The Associated Press.

The film appears designed to fill a gap in the hagiography of the popular president by providing an inspirational back story for his rise to the Kremlin.

Its nationwide release Thursday on DVD comes 17 days before of the election of his successor, at a time of uncertainty about Putin's future role.

"It's a film about the life of a politician, about love, about people in general and the human relationships every person has," Voropayev told Ekho Moskvy radio last week.

Few people, however, have so much in common with Putin.

Like Putin, the main character courts his wife-to-be in Leningrad, now St. Petersburg, and moves with her to Cold War East Germany—where Putin was a KGB officer. He then returns home for a stint in St. Petersburg and scales the heights of power in Moscow.

The character, Alexander Alexandrovich Platov, has more hair than Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, but the style is the same. Seen from behind on the promotional poster, the actor playing Platov is a dead ringer for the Russian president.

Another giveaway: Platov, like Putin, is always late.

Few of the people who packed a special screening at a central Moscow movie house Monday night were in doubt about the subject of the film, which will not be released in cinemas.

Winkler spoke with Ritter before he died

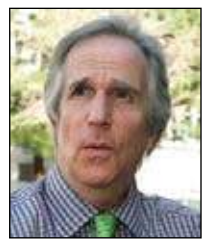
GLENDALE, Calif. (AP)—Actor Henry Winkler took the witness stand Wednesday in a lawsuit over the death of actor John Ritter, telling jurors he had a conversation with his friend just hours before he died.

Winkler, who played The Fonz on "Happy Days," also gave the jury a testimonial to the comedic brilliance of Ritter, who was best known for the classic sitcom "Three's Company."

"He kept everyone laughing. He was a professional," said Winkler.

Ritter, at the time starring in the TV show "8 Simple Rules ... For Dating My Teenage Daughter," died on Sept. 11, 2003, after suffering a tear in his aorta, known as an aortic dissection. He was 54.

Winkler testified that on the day of Ritter's death he was doing a guest appearance on "8 Simple Rules" and he did not suspect anything was seriously wrong with his friend.



Winkler

At one point, he said, they were recalling old times before they were due to perform an episode in which Winkler was to play Ritter's new boss.

"We were reminiscing," Winkler said. "He was sweating (and said) 'I really need to get some water.' I said 'I really need to memorize my lines.' And he went one way and I went the other. And that was the last time I saw him."

The lawsuit says Ritter was treated for a heart attack instead of the aortic dissection and seeks $67 million from a radiologist who earlier gave Ritter a body scan and the cardiologist who treated him that day. The trial follows settlements with Providence St. Joseph Medical Center in Burbank and other medical personnel for about $14 million.

Defense attorneys have told the jury that neither doctor was responsible for Ritter's death and that the body scan two years earlier showed his aorta was of normal size and there was no sign it would dissect.

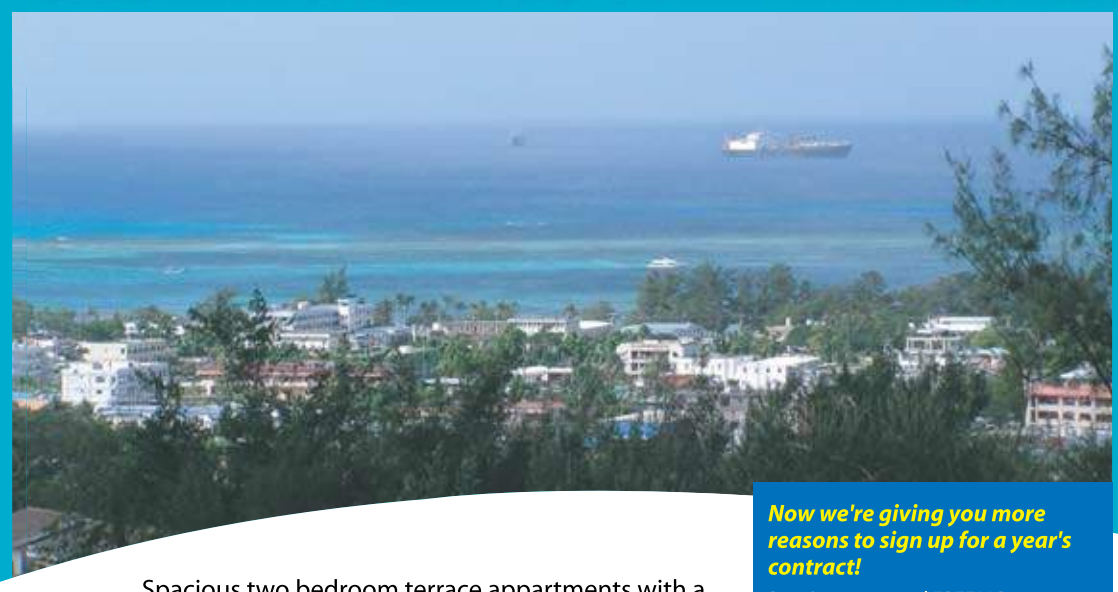
Winkler said that a while after he saw Ritter the members of the cast were told to go home but weren't told what was wrong. He said he knew it was the fifth birthday of one of Ritter's children and he thought perhaps he had decided to quit early to celebrate.

"At 9 at night I was called and told he was in the hospital and at 11 or 11:30 I was called to say 'We have lost John,'" Winkler testified.

He told jurors Ritter had been thrilled that "lightning had struck again" and he had a new hit show.

24/7 POWER AVAILABLE

OCEANVIEW TERRACES



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MESSAGE OF APPRECIATION

To our many relatives and friends who came to share this very special moment with us as we said our farewell to our dearly beloved father and grandfather,

JOHN "MANUEL" DELEON GUERRERO PANGELINAN

Your words of wisdom, encouragement, support and unconditional love during this very difficult time have shown us the light to hold dearly and live on with loving memories of our dearly beloved. In our hearts, we will feel that emptiness which we all treasured immensely, a father's love and presence always, but we are strengthened with the belief that he is resting peacefully with our Creator.

We are forever grateful to you and shall always keep you close to our hearts. We offer our prayers in thanksgiving to you, and we humbly ask that as you pray, you will remember him, too.

We would like to extend our deepest and sincerest gratitude to:

The Tan Family, who for the last 20+ years were not only our father's colleagues, but his family and best friends as well. Your unwavering support and love of our father will always be remembered with the deepest gratitude.

To our relatives and friends, we can't thank you enough for caring for our father, making him laugh and being there for him when it counted the most.

We would also like to thank Bishop Thomas Camacho and all the clergy, Commonwealth Health Center, the emergency room doctors and nurses and the ward doctors and nurses at CHC, Continental Micronesia, Inc., the employees of the Tan Holdings Corporation, the staff at Bobbie's Café, and all those who came from afar, Guam, Rota and Tinian. Most especially, to all the staff at the Saipan Tribune for all the hard work, dedication, love and support. We wish we could mention each of you by name, who in one way or another gave precious time and generosity.

Thank You Very Much and May God Bless You All…

The Pangelinan Family

'Idol' narrows competition to 24 aspiring singers

NEW YORK (AP)—The tears flowed on "American Idol" Wednesday night as the show trimmed the competition to 24 semifinalists. They were mostly happy tears for the 12 guys and 12 gals who made the cut on the final night of Hollywood week. The winners included teen singing prodigy David Archuleta and Janis Joplin soundalike/respiratory nurse Amanda Overmyer.

Brooke White, who claimed in her audition to have never seen a rated-R movie, was beside herself with emotion before learning her fate from Simon Cowell and company. The verdict: Yes! Cue more crying.

One of the biggest upsets of the night was the elimination of 18-year-old Josiah Leming, who seemed to be a judge favorite until his shaky rendition of "Stand By Me." Cowell said Tuesday that Leming—who lives in his car and sings with a faux British accent—was too confident for his own good.

Leming said he thought he was a shoo-in to make it to the finalists' ranks; in keeping with the night's theme, he too cried after the judges delivered the bad news.

Next Tuesday, the top 12 male singers are in the hot seat on the Fox talent contest, and, on Wednesday, the women follow.

The men are: Archuleta, 17, Murray, Utah; Colton Berry, 18, Staunton, Va.; Robbie Carrico, 26, Melbourne, Fla.; Jason Castro, 20, Rockwall, Texas; David Cook, 25, Tulsa, Okla.; Chikezie Eze, 22, Inglewood, Calif.; Garrett Haley, 17, Elida, Ohio; David Hernandez, 24, Glendale, Ariz.; Luke Menard, 29, Crawfordsville, Ind.; Danny Noriega, 18, Azusa, Calif.; Jason Yeager, 28, Branson, Mo., and Michael Johns, 29, Los Angeles by way of Australia.

And the ladies: Overmyer, 23, Mulberry, Ind.; White, 24, Van Nuys, Calif.; Joanne Borgella, 25, Hoboken, N.J.; Kristy Lee Cook, 24, Selma, Ore.; Amy Davis, 25, Cedar Lake, Ind.; Asia'h Epperson, 19, Joplin, Mo.; Alexandrea Lushington, 17, Douglasville, Ga.; Kady Malloy, 18, Houston; Ramiele Malubay, 20, Miramar, Fla.; Syesha Mercado, 21, Miami; Alaina Whitaker, 16, Tulsa, Okla., and Carly Smithson, San Diego by way of Dublin, Ireland.

Mel Gibson meets terms of probation

MALIBU, Calif. (AP) -- Mel Gibson has met terms of his no-contest plea to misdemeanor drunken driving after his notorious 2006 arrest in which he made derogatory comments about Jews, a judge found Wednesday. Gibson will remain on probation for about 18 more months, but won't have report at Superior Court again after Judge Lawrence Mira approved his progress.

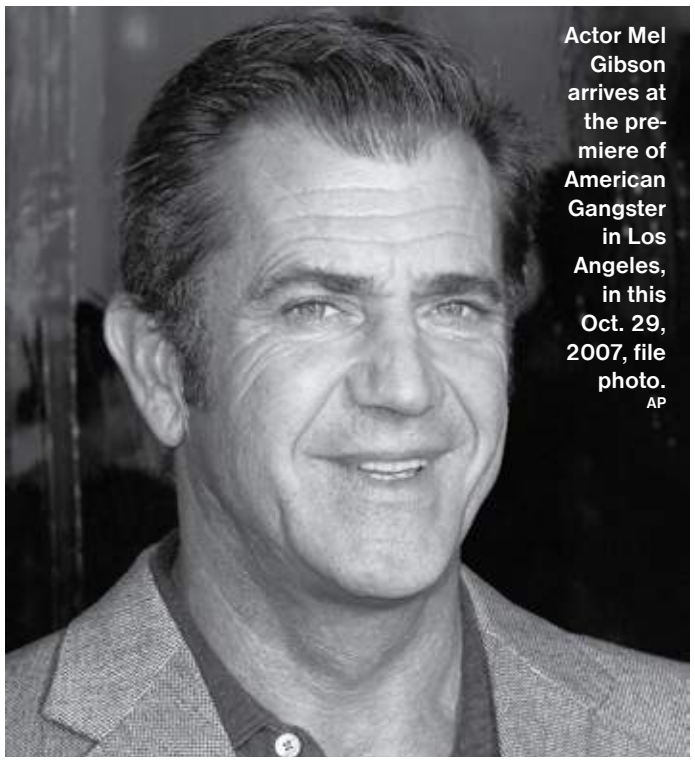
"Assuming there is no violation on the terms of the probation, it will be finished at the end of 36 months," Deputy District Attorney Gina Satriano said outside court.

After his no-contest plea, Gibson was sentenced to three years of probation, paid about $1,600 in fines and had to attend Alcoholics Anonymous and other meetings.

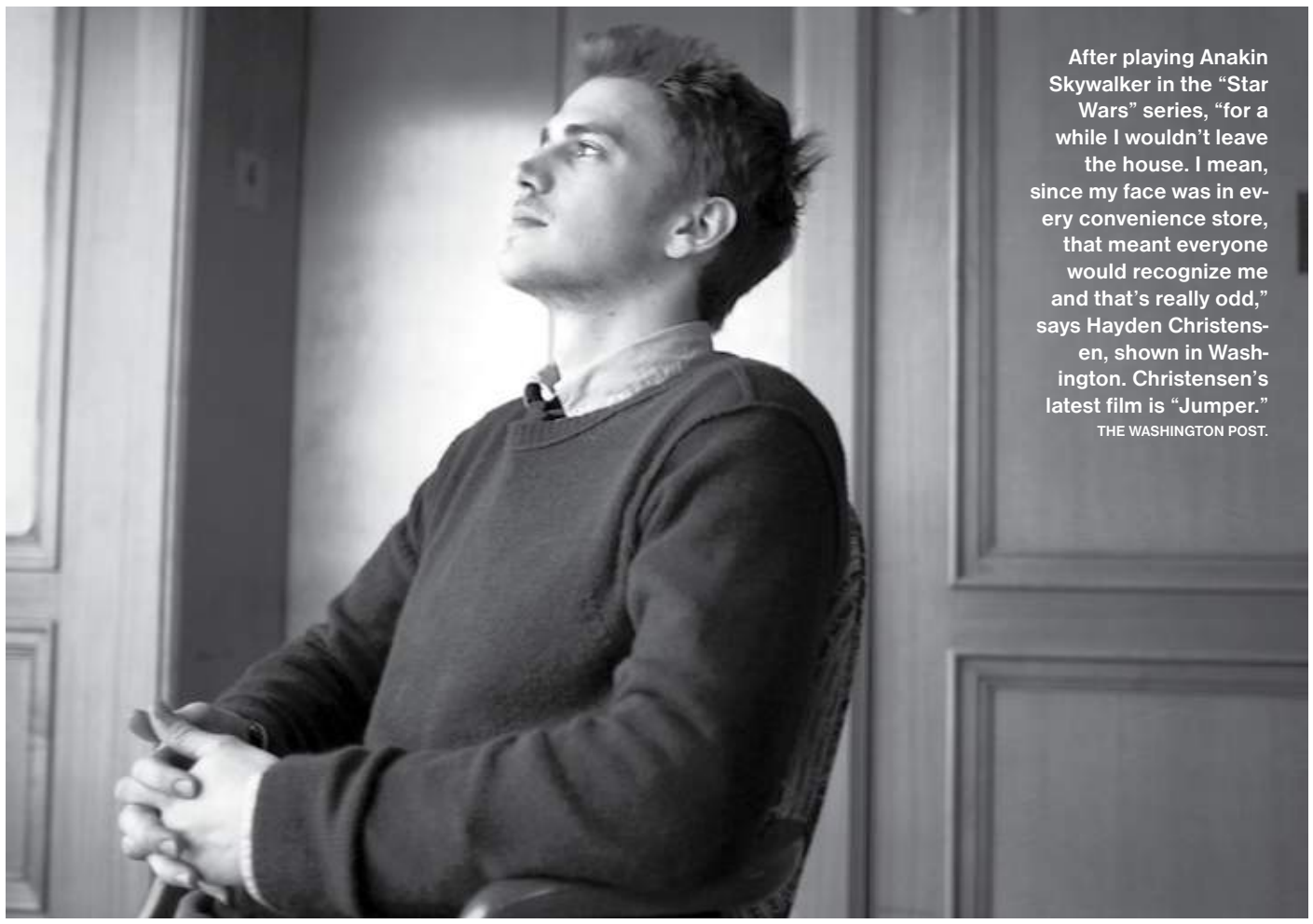
Satriano said Gibson attended five AA meetings every week for nearly five months and three per week for seven months. He also completed a 90-day program for drunken-driving offenders that included individual and group counseling, Satriano said.

She said Gibson has also volunteered to make a public service announcement.

Gibson has repeatedly apologized for making the derogatory comments about Jews to the sheriff's deputy who arrested him.



Actor Mel Gibson arrives at the premiere of American Gangster in Los Angeles, in this Oct. 29, 2007, file photo. AP



After playing Anakin Skywalker in the "Star Wars" series, "for a while I wouldn't leave the house. I mean, since my face was in every convenience store, that meant everyone would recognize me and that's really odd," says Hayden Christensen, shown in Washington. Christensen's latest film is "Jumper." THE WASHINGTON POST.

Funny, he's Darth Vader, but it's us breathing heavy

By CORY OHLENDORF
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON—Our theory on The Roles of Hayden Christensen goes something like this:

An angry, misunderstood boy-on-the-verge-of-manhood seeks respect and attention and has a fantastically affecting crying scene along the way to his eventual enlightenment and/or vindication.

Really, this happens in virtually all his films—from the Goth teen in "Life as a House" to a cub reporter in "Shattered Glass" to his eventual turn to the dark side in "Star Wars." (And no one cries like Christensen. He's even the cover face on "Crying Men," photographer Sam Taylor-Wood's book, which also features Jude Law, Ryan Gosling and Ed Harris.)

We explain this theory to the actor here at lunch, where he's just come from a panel discussion at MIT on quantum teleportation—the basis for his latest film, "Jumper," out Thursday.

"You're right," he says of our theory. "There is an underlying theme. I like characters that have an interesting growth, when there's change, and they're affected by the elements of the story. I've always believed that conflict is the essence of drama."

But now the 26-year-old Canadian is breaking the formula; the trembling man-child character is growing up. In the recent thriller "Awake," Christensen plays a rich businessman who undergoes heart transplant surgery, but begins to suspect the doctors are trying to do him harm. (Critics and moviegoers were not impressed.) In the action movie "Jumper," he plays the ultimate wayfarer, a man who can teleport himself around the globe and becomes a reluctant hero in a secret war.

If you only know Christensen as the young, pre-scary-breathing Darth Vader, here's a little H.C. catch-up class (we're kind of a fan, if you hadn't guessed).

He started acting at 7.

"I did a few commercials. Growing up it was a means to get a day off of school, and more money than you could earn with a paper route, but at the same time I profusely denied it, and—"

Denied it?

"Yeah, like if someone said they had seen me in a commercial, I'd say, `What are you talking about? That wasn't me.' I was playing competitive hockey, and the kids I was hanging out with weren't really the theater crowd."

When he was cast as Anakin Skywalker, the flawed Jedi knight, suddenly being Hayden Christensen meant magazine cover shoots, look-alike action figures—and your face on a bag of chips.

"When it happened, for a while I wouldn't leave the house. I mean, since my face was in every convenience store, that meant everyone would recognize me and that's really odd. So I just sort of hermitized for a little while."

In between filming "Star Wars" Episodes II and III, he set out to make "Shattered Glass," about disgraced New Republic writer Stephen Glass, after reading about the scandal in Vanity Fair. It was the first film produced by Forest Park Pictures, the L.A.-based production company Christensen runs with older brother Tove.

Christensen says he doesn't spend much time in Los Angeles. We learn that he, too, has a theory—on celebrity.

"I think that people's exposure is in your realm of control. It's largely just a function of your choices, and if you don't want to be seen, they don't see you."

He pauses.

"I think I do an OK job of proving my theory. Sure, fame has its affectation, but you can still lead the life you want to lead. I've never had that fame motivation. The less people know about me, the better my work will be, because the more they know about me, then I'm less believable as a character."

Christensen contrasts his experience acting in "Jumper," directed by Doug Liman, with his experiences on the two "Star Wars" directed by George Lucas, movies in which even fans found him a tad, well, wooden.

"Doug ... really wanted the actors' insight into the story, asking us to script meetings, which was a treat, you know, how collaborative he was. It was really satisfying."

And Lucas?

"George came up to me on the set one day during my first `Star Wars' and said something that I never fully understood until after we were done filming. He said, `As an actor, you have to think of yourself as a ditch digger.' ... What he was implying was that on his movie, I needed to think of myself as a ditch digger, because it wasn't the proper arena for actual creative expression. This was his thing. It was all very thought-out in his head, and I needed to show up to make his wants a reality. And so really, what he was saying to me, was: `Don't let this experience discourage you from what acting can really be about, because that's not what this is.' I just wish I would've figured that out a little sooner."

Christensen recently bought a 19th-century farm south of Toronto, so he can finally move the things he's been storing at Mom and Dad's. We ask if he kept that rat-tail Jedi braid.

"I did! Only because it was my first `Star Wars,' and I wanted to keep as much as I could. I got a light saber, of course, and then I had to keep my boots. I keep all my characters' shoes, actually."

Shoes?

"Yeah, it's sort of the first bit of my character that I sort of decide on, while I'm figuring them out. Because that's what grounds me and it informs how I walk and how I feel on my feet."

We ask about "Virgin Territory," a period piece based on the 14th-century Italian classic "The Decameron," which Christensen filmed in Florence with Mischa Barton. It's a comedy. With no release date.

Hayden stops mid-slurp from his bowl of steaming chicken noodle.

"You know about that one? Damn. I'm not sure what they're calling it now and it's hard to speak to, because I haven't seen the film in its current state and I haven't heard boo from the people who made it. That stuff always shocks me. How people can be so flippant with money. And that for me was a real departure. It's a comedy, you know, which I've never done."

Oh, we know.

Beijing mulls response to Spielberg move

BEIJING (AP)—Rights groups on Wednesday praised Hollywood director Steven Spielberg's decision to shun involvement with the Beijing Olympics opening and closing ceremonies because China was not doing enough to help end the crisis in Darfur.

Spielberg's move marked a high-profile setback for Beijing and its efforts to keep at bay a monthslong campaign by activists to spotlight the authoritarian communist regime's human rights record.

Although not entirely unexpected, it appeared to catch Beijing organizers flat-footed.

Spielberg, who won an Oscar for his 1993 Holocaust film "Schindler's List," said he had not signed his contract to serve as an artistic adviser to the Games' opening and closing ceremonies in hopes that dialogue with China would produce results.

China is believed to have special influence with Sudan because it buys two-thirds of the country's oil exports, while selling the regime weapons and defending Khartoum in the U.N. Security Council.

"While China's representatives have conveyed to me that they are working to end the terrible tragedy in Darfur, the grim realities of the suffering continue unabated," Spielberg said in a statement Tuesday.

Praising his decision, Human Rights Watch said Beijing must also be pressured to improve "deplorable" human rights conditions at home as well as to act on Darfur, where fighting between government-backed militia and rebels has left more than 200,000 people dead and an estimated 2.5 million displaced since 2003.

"Corporate sponsors, governments and National Olympic Committees should urge Beijing to improve human rights conditions in China," the New York-based group said.

Spielberg, whose 2005 film "Munich" dealt with the killings of 11 Israeli athletes at the 1972 Olympics, had indicated as early as August that he might not take part in the ceremonies, but Beijing seemed unprepared to respond when his formal announcement came.

Two spokesmen for the Beijing organizing committee said they were preparing a response. A U.S.-based consultant from public relations firm Hill & Knowlton, hired by the organizing committee, did not immediately return a phone call seeking comment.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry said it was seeking more information before commenting.

Hollywood director Steven Spielberg, right, tours the construction site of Beijing's National Stadium with Chinese film maker Zhang Yimou, center, and Jiang Xiaoyu, executive vice president of the Beijing Olympics organizing committee, after a news conference announcing the creation team for the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing April 16, 2006. AP

New 'Star Wars' film animated will be

NEW YORK (AP)—The "Star Wars" universe, already substantially rendered by computer generated imagery, is giving in all the way to animation.

"Star Wars: The Clone Wars," an animated film, will open in theaters Aug. 15 and be followed by a TV series of the same name, to air on the Cartoon Network and TNT this fall.

"I felt there were a lot more `Star Wars' stories left to tell," said "Star Wars" creator George Lucas in a statement. "I was eager to start telling some of them through animation and, at the same time, push the animation forward."

Produced by Lucasfilm Animation, both the film and TV show will be distributed through Time Warner Inc., which owns TNT, the Cartoon Network and the film's distributor, Warner Bros.

Lucas, who serves as executive producer, is also planning a live-action television series spinoff of the franchise, which he began working on last fall. The animated series has long been in the works, though the theatrical release was only announced late Tuesday.

The movie and subsequent series takes place between the ground covered in episodes II and III of the "Star Wars" films: "Attack of the Clones" (2002) and "Revenge of the Sith" (2005). It will include cartoon versions of many familiar characters, including Anakin Skywalker, Obi-Wan Kenobi, Padme Amidala and General Grievous.

A new character named Ahsoka, Anakin's padawan, will be the first female Jedi to be a character of focus.

"It turned out to be an idea that George wanted to explore," said Dave Filoni, director of the "Clone Wars" movie and supervising director of the series. "Henry Gillroy (a writer on the series) and I very much wanted to have a female Jedi in more of a lead role because you've had all the boys."

More than 30 episodes are planned, though Filoni declined to say exactly how long the show will run. He acknowledged it's a finite timeline before encroaching on "Revenge of the Sith" story lines.

Though the "Star Wars" films have been extraordinarily lucrative, the force won't be expected to be as strong in cartoon form. The film and series are clearly aimed at younger viewers, though Filoni hopes to also entice the many "Star Wars" die-hard fans.

"An animated series always appeals more to a younger audience," said Filoni. "But at the same time, we've tried to do some sophisticated things and ensure that we are going to satisfy the broad spectrum of `Star Wars' fans."

Though Lucas farms out various "Star Wars" projects in what's known as the "`Star Wars' expanded universe," Filoni says that Lucas ensured "The Clone Wars" has "that `Star Wars' feeling."

Fans will also remember other animated series following the first time Lucas completed a "Star Wars" trilogy. After "Return of the Jedi," the series "Ewoks" and "Droids" ran in the late `80s.

The Cartoon Network also ran an earlier version of a "Clone Wars" animated series for three seasons beginning in 2003.

Japanese film director Kon Ichikawa dies

TOKYO (AP)—Kon Ichikawa, the Japanese director who married artistic technique with humanistic spirit in such films as the Oscar-nominated "Harp of Burma" and "Tokyo Olympiad," has died. He was 92.

Ichikawa died of pneumonia in a Tokyo hospital on Feb. 13, said Chizuko Wagatsuma, a spokeswoman with Toho Co., the company that released "The Makioka Sisters" and many of his other films over a long directing career that began in 1945.

He had been hospitalized since late January, she said.

Known for his artistic technique and the wide range of genres in which he worked, Ichikawa won a jury prize at the Cannes Film Festival in 1960 for his movie, "Kagi."

He also received a lifetime achievement award in 2001 from the World Film Festival of Montreal.

"Ichikawa surely stands alongside Akira Kurosawa and Keisuke Miyashita as one of Japan's great directors," said noted Japanese film critic Tadao Sato.

"He made not just art films, but also melodramas, documentaries, mysteries and others ... and he brought to all of them a technique and craft that showed he took the works seriously no matter the subject," Sato said. "Even his light entertainments had class."

Ichikawa first attracted attention outside of Japan with the Oscar-nominated 1956 drama, "Harp of Burma." Based on a novel, the film told the story of Japanese soldier at the end of World War II who, overwhelmed by the sight of his dead comrades in arms, vows to live a life of prayer and bury the dead.

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The Spiderwick Chronicles

Friday		4:00	7:20	9:30
Sat & Sun	1:00	4:00	7:20	9:30
Monday	1:00	4:00	7:20	
Tue thru Thurs		4:00	7:20	

Seth Rogen, Mary-Loise Parker
Fantasy, Children • Rated PG13

Synopsis

Peculiar things start to happen the moment the Grace family (Jared, his twin brother Simon, sister Mallory and their mom) leave New York and move into the secluded old house owned by their great, great uncle Arthur Spiderwick. Unable to explain the strange disappearances and accidents that seem to be happening on a daily basis, the family blames Jared. When he, Simon and Mallory investigate what"s really going on, they uncover the fantastic truth of the Spiderwick estate and of the creatures that inhabit it.

Jumper

Friday		4:05	7:25	9:40
Sat & Sun	1:05	4:05	7:25	9:40
Monday	1:05	4:05	7:25	
Tue thru Thurs		4:05	7:25	

Hayden Christensen, Samuel L. Jackson
Adventure, Sci-Fi • Rated PG13

Synopsis

David Rice has grown up with a mysterious power of which many have dreamed. He is completely and utterly mobile, able to zap through wormholes in the space-time fabric to any city, any building, any place at all that his mind desires. In the blink of an eye, he can "jump" from one side of the earth to the other and back again—he can tour twenty different sunsets in one night, he can have breakfast on the Egyptian Sphinx, spend the day surfing in Australia, then pop over to Paris for dinner and enjoy dessert in Japan.

★ ★ ★

Fool's Gold

Friday		4:10	7:15	10:00
Sat & Sun	1:20	4:10	7:15	10:00
Monday	1:20	4:10	7:15	
Tue thru Thurs		4:10	7:15	

Matthew McConaughey, Kate Hudson
Action, Adventure • Rated PG13

Welcome Home Roscoe Jenkins

Friday		4:25	7:30	9:50
Sat & Sun	1:25	4:25	7:30	9:50
Monday	1:25	4:25	7:30	
Tue thru Thurs		4:25	7:30	

Martin Lawrence, Louis C.K.
Comedy • Rated PG13

Meet the Spartans

Friday		4:20	7:10	9:35
Sat & Sun	1:15	4:20	7:10	9:35
Monday	1:15	4:20	7:10	
Tue thru Thurs		4:20	7:10	

Diedrich Bader, Kevin Sorbo
Comedy • Rated PG13

Sakal, Sakali, Saklolo

Friday		4:30	7:05	9:55
Sat & Sun	1:30	4:30	7:05	9:55
Monday	1:30	4:30	7:05	
Tue thru Thurs		4:30	7:05	

Judy Ann Santos, Ryan Agoncillo
Comedy, Romance • Rated NR

Cloverfield

Friday		@	7:00	9:45
Sat & Sun	@	@	7:00	9:45
Monday	@	@	7:00	
Tue thru Thurs		@	7:00	

Michael Stahl David, Mike Vogel
Comedy, Drama • Rated PG13

27 Dresses

Friday		4:15	@	@
Sat & Sun	1:10	4:15	@	@
Monday	1:10	4:15	@	
Tue thru Thurs		4:15	@	

Katherine Heigl, James Marsden
Romantic Comedy • Rated PG13

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Marijuana has complex effect on teens' developing brains

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DearAbby

DEAR ABBY: You were right to tell "Just Saying No" (Jan. 16) that his pot-smoking classmates could be headed for addiction or other problems. I worry that marijuana poses more risks to teens than they—or their parents—recognize. More kids need professional help kicking marijuana than for all other drugs combined. It is not a "harmless" drug.

School failure, which you mentioned, could be only the first of many problems daily pot smokers may experience. Researchers have a long way to go in understanding the complexity of brain function, but we know that illicit drug use changes the developing brain. Many young people smoke pot before their brain development is settled, and their chronic use of the drug can affect certain centers in the brain that control emotion and reason.

Research shows that regular use of marijuana may also lead to mental health problems. Youth who use marijuana weekly have double the risk of depression later in life, and are three times more likely than non-users to have suicidal thoughts.

MARC GALANTER, M.D., DIRECTOR,
DIVISION OF ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE,
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

DEAR DR. GALANTER: Thank you for lending your expertise on this subject. I am sure many teens and their parents will find your letter enlightening.

If they wish, younger readers can read and consider the latest scientific facts about marijuana and other drugs by logging onto www.abovetheinfluence.com. Parents can visit www.theantidrug.com for tips on talking to their adolescents and teens about drugs and how to get them help if that conversation begins "too late."

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: Every time my husband and I attend a viewing, no matter who the deceased person is, my husband insists that I get in line in front of him. This means I'm the one who must approach the grieving family.

Some of the funerals we have been to are for people my husband knew well, but I knew only casually. It makes me uncomfortable to be the first to approach the family. He insists that it's "proper etiquette" to have me in front of him. I would have no problem being first if it was for someone I was close to. I feel he should do the same. Is there a right way or a wrong way to line up?

ROCKY RIVER, OHIO, MOURNER

DEAR R.R.O.M.: There is no right or wrong way for mourners to line up for a viewing. Your husband may feel uncomfortable addressing the grieving family because he doesn't know what to say, and that's why he's defaulting to the old "ladies first" practice. (Please inform him that it should be ladies first only if the lady would LIKE to go first, not if she objects!)

However, because you appear to be stuck in the role of "point person" for your family, simply tell the family members you are "sorry for their loss." This applies whether you know them well or not, and it's all they really need to hear.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I am a senior in high school and in a long-distance relationship with a magician's apprentice who is a year younger than me. What should I expect from this relationship?

LINDSAY IN SAN JOSE, CALIF.

DEAR LINDSAY: Because, as part of their business, magicians often spend a lot of time on the road, expect a vanishing act. (Now you see him -- now you don't.)

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included.)

Cyruses 'simply forgot to buckle up'

YONKERS, N.Y. (AP)—Billy Ray Cyrus says he and his daughter, the "Hannah Montana" actress Miley Cyrus, simply forgot to buckle up for one of their scenes in their new hit movie.

"We got caught up in the moment of filming, and we made a mistake and forgot to buckle our seat belts," the country music star said Wednesday on People magazine's Web site. "Seat belt safety is extremely important."

Consumer Reports magazine had noticed that the Cyruses were not wearing seat belts as they rode in the back of a Range Rover during Disney's "Hannah Montana/Miley Cyrus: Best of Both Worlds Concert."

Don Mays, the director of product safety at Consumers Union, which publishes Yonkers-based Consumer Reports, said Wednesday, "We applaud the Cyrus family for recognizing that wearing seat belts in rear seats is essential."

The magazine had noted that 65 percent of the 13-to-15-year-olds killed in auto accidents in 2006 were not wearing seat belts. Miley Cyrus is 15.

Telephone calls and e-mails to Disney and to several of Miley Cyrus' representatives were not immediately returned Wednesday.

Chan promotes Olympic equestrian event

HONG KONG (AP)—Jackie Chan saddled up for a video to promote the Beijing Olympics' equestrian event.

In the 30-second video, the 53-year-old "Rush Hour" star urges audiences to visit his hometown of Hong Kong to watch the event and introduces various local tourist sites, Mayee Tang, a spokeswoman for the Hong Kong Tourism Board, which is producing the video, said Wednesday.

Chan recorded the dialogue in both English and Mandarin Chinese, and the video was to be aired in mainland China and foreign markets, Tang said.

Photos posted on Chan's official Web site show the action star sitting on a horse, resplendent in riding gear, including a black helmet, black suit jacket, white tie and black boots.

Chan's video, shot Monday, highlights efforts to promote one of the Olympics' more low-profile events.

A rash of equine diseases and substandard quarantine procedures in China forced Beijing to hand the equestrian events to Hong Kong, which has a well-established racing circuit but few facilities for dressage and show-jumping events.

The Hong Kong Jockey Club, which controls horse racing in the former British colony, has spent about $100 million on upgrading existing venues and building new ones for the Olympic equestrian competition, which will take place Aug. 9 to Aug. 20.

In other promotional efforts for the Beijing Olympics, Chan also recorded the event's official one-year countdown song, "We Are Ready."

AP

In this photo released by the Hong Kong Tourism Board, Hong Kong action movie star Jackie Chan poses while riding a horse Monday, Feb. 11, 2008, during the filming of an advertisement for the Hong Kong Tourism Board to promote the Beijing Olympics' equestrian event to be held in Hong Kong.

Lenny Kravitz postponing European tour

MIAMI BEACH (AP)—Lenny Kravitz was taken to the hospital Tuesday and will postpone his upcoming European tour due to a bout of bronchitis.

Kravitz was set to begin the tour this week. It was to run through the end of March, accompanying the release of his new album, "It Is Time for a Love Revolution."

The 43-year-old singer had been struggling with a series of severe respiratory tract infections and the flu since mid-January, his spokeswoman, Carleen Donovan, said in a statement.

Donovan said Kravitz was suffering from dehydration and fatigue and that doctors advised him to check into the hospital. He was taken to Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach.

In a statement, Kravitz apologized to his European fans.

"I am extremely disappointed that I am not able to come to Europe to see everyone and also perform. Unfortunately I need to take this time to rest and get healthy and so I was forced to make this decision," he said.

Kravitz's European trip will be rescheduled as soon as possible, Donovan said.

His first stop was scheduled for London next Monday, followed by a performance in Brussels, Belgium.

AP

Singer Lenny Kravitz arrives at the American Music Awards in Los Angeles in this Nov. 18, 2007, file photo.

Shakira charity auction raises $76,000

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Ever paid $3,000 for a bra? That's what one fan forked over for one of Shakira's bras. Another admirer shelled out $14,000 for the privilege of meeting the pop sensation and receiving front-row seats at a future show in Toronto.

The two bids were among the highest offered for 40 items that Shakira donated to an Internet auction for her Bare Feet Foundation, which is building a school for impoverished children in northern Colombia.

Another popular item: a shiny lavender skirt with turquoise-and-coral beading that she wore while singing "Hips Don't Lie," which fetched more than $1,000.

The items were from Shakira's 2007 "Oral Fixation" tour.

Still up for grabs until Sunday: an electric Fender guitar and an acoustic Taylor guitar, both bearing the 31-year-old singer's autograph.

The auction has raised $76,000.

"It was a phenomenal success," Eric Gazin, president of Auction Cause, told The Associated Press in a telephone interview Tuesday. "We had bidders from 10 countries."

Spike Lee receives $50,000 artist award

NEW ALBANY, Ohio (AP)—Spike Lee has been awarded the $50,000 Wexner Prize, which recognizes innovation, quality and integrity among artists.

The silver hammer sculpture was presented to the 50-year-old filmmaker by Abigail Wexner, wife of Les Wexner, founder, chairman and chief executive of Columbus-based clothing and specialty products retailer Limited Brands Inc.

"Spike Lee exemplifies what the Wexner Prize was created to celebrate: a bold creative spirit who is unafraid to provoke and challenge us. He tests the American mind, and its attitudes, assumptions and values, and in doing so, he has advanced American cinema in remarkable ways," Les Wexner said in a statement.

AP

Filmmaker Spike Lee, right, receives the Wexner Prize from Abigail Wexner Monday, Feb. 11, 2008 in New Albany, Ohio.

Pastimes

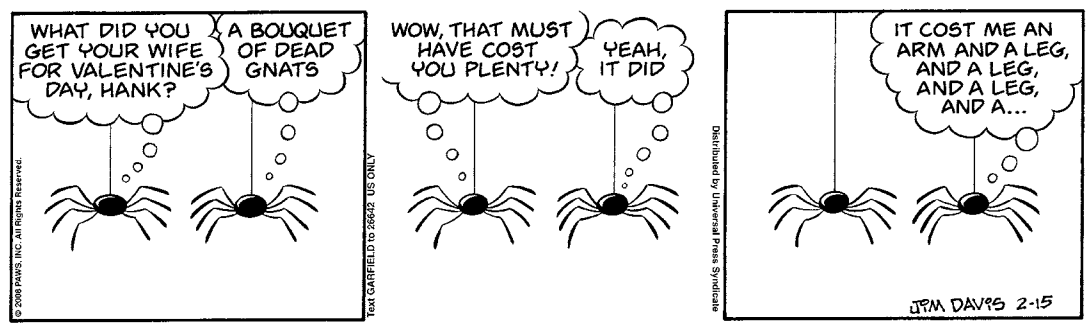
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

HERE'S THE TRANSMOGRIFIER GUN. NOW TRY AGAIN, AND DO IT RIGHT. I WANT TO BE A PTERODACTYL.
OK, HERE YOU GO.
ZAP
WELL, NOW, THAT'S MORE LIKE IT!
SAY, WHEN DID YOU TURN YOURSELF INTO A 200-FOOT-TALL COLOSSUS?
I DIDN'T. WHY?
© 1988 Universal Press Syndicate
2/15

Garfield®

By Jim Davis


WHAT DID YOU GET YOUR WIFE FOR VALENTINE'S DAY, HANK?
A BOUQUET OF DEAD GNATS
WOW, THAT MUST HAVE COST YOU PLENTY!
YEAH, IT DID
IT COST ME AN ARM AND A LEG, AND A LEG, AND A LEG, AND A...
JIM DAVIS 2-15
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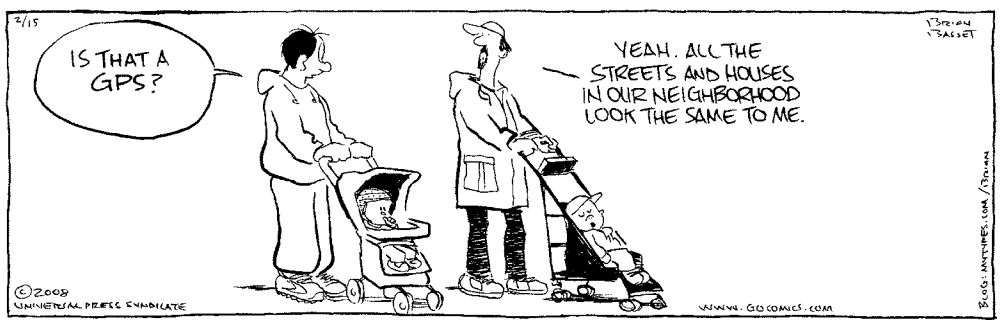
Text GARFIELD to 26642 US ONLY
Distributed by Universal Press Syndicate

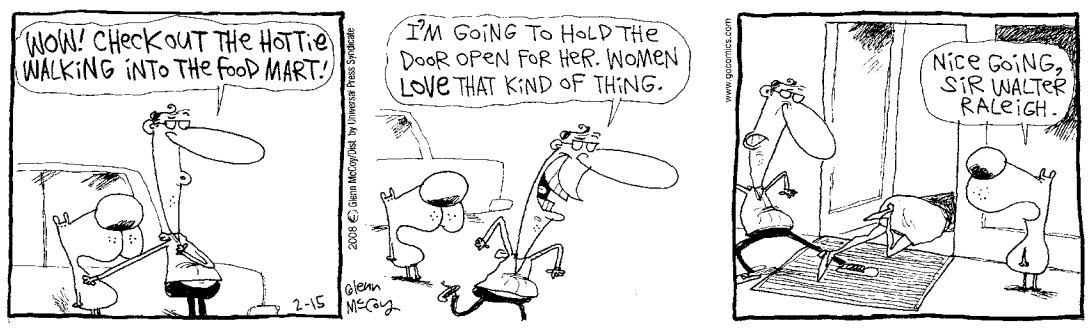
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


2/15
IS THAT A GPS?
YEAH. ALL THE STREETS AND HOUSES IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD LOOK THE SAME TO ME.
©2008 UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE
WWW.GOCOMICS.COM

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


WOW! CHECK OUT THE HOTTIE WALKING INTO THE FOOD MART!
2-15
I'M GOING TO HOLD THE DOOR OPEN FOR HER. WOMEN LOVE THAT KIND OF THING.
2008 © glenn McCoy/dist. by Universal Press Syndicate
NICE GOING, SIR WALTER RALEIGH.
www.gocomics.com

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

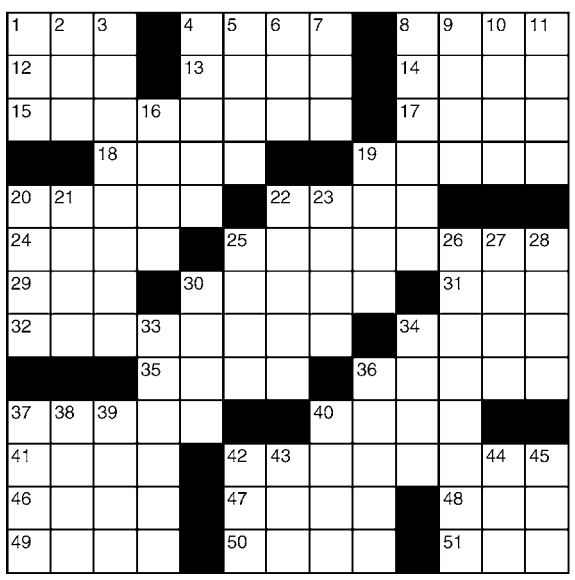
ACROSS
1 Tummy muscles
4 Fill a suitcase
8 Therefore
12 Homer's interjection
13 — vera
14 Angel's prop
15 Final performance
17 Seaweed
18 Tree house?
19 Draw a conclusion
20 Texas A&M student
22 Watch noise
24 Wonka creator Roald
25 1933 Marx Brothers movie
29 Palindromic title
30 Maguire of "Spider-Man"
31 Street address?
32 Convict quickly and falsely
34 Plumbing problem
35 Hightails it from the law
36 Anti-macassar
37 Inexpensive
40 — and crafts
41 Actor Neeson
42 Fit together
46 Gumbo need
47 Vicinity
48 FDR's "Blue Eagle"
49 Longings
50 Bacterium
51 Wage earner's woe

DOWN
1 Commercials
2 Acknowledge applause
3 Forcibly detain
4 Old hat
5 Oodles
6 Anti
7 Small barrel
8 "Merci"
9 Fair share, often
10 Desire
11 Practice pugilism
16 Armstrong or Simon
19 Disgusting
20 Hebrew month
21 Enthusiastic
22 Oom-pah producers
23 On the rocks
25 Unhappy destiny
26 Deferential
27 Caspian feeder
28 Sluggish
30 Snare
33 Andean herd
34 Mississippi ex-senator Trent
36 Reverie
37 Cause a surfeit
38 Raise
39 Deserve
40 State with conviction
42 Hammarskjöld of the U.N.
43 Raw rock
44 401(k) alternative
45 Remiss

Solution time: 25 mins.

E	L	L	E	■	I	L	L	■	S	P	E	W	
L	I	E	N	■	S	E	A	■	T	O	G	O	
S	E	E	N	■	A	D	S	■	E	R	G	O	
E	U	R	O	P	A	■	A	I	N	T	■	■	
■	■	■	B	A	C	K	G	R	O	U	N	D	
S	P	I	L	L	■	I	N	K	■	G	O	O	
N	A	M	E	■	P	T	A	■	M	A	G	S	
A	I	M	■	D	O	E	■	F	A	L	S	E	
G	R	O	U	N	D	R	U	L	E	■	■	■	
■	■	■	B	R	A	C	■	M	Y	S	E	L	F
C	R	I	B	■	A	L	B	■	T	S	A	R	
H	U	L	A	■	S	I	R	■	R	A	R	E	
A	M	E	N	■	T	E	A	■	O	U	S	T	

Yesterday's answer 2-15



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Brandon Boyd, 32; Matt Groening, 54; Melissa Manchester, 57; Jane Seymour, 57

Happy Birthday: You can make anything happen this year if you put your mind to it. Uncertainty should not slow you down but instead force you to make a decision and choose a direction. Taking action, regardless of the results, will be a learning experience. It's OK to change your mind mid-stream if it helps you get what you want in the end. Your numbers are 5, 11, 17, 27, 34, 44

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Make your pitch and push your ideas. Once you start, it will be hard to ignore you. Do your homework and watch your goals turn into a reality. To benefit others will be to benefit you. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Don't get wrapped up in someone else's crusade. If you don't believe in something, don't do it. Spend time building your own dreams and surrounding yourself with people who are there to help. Socialize with people who participate. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Don't let a burden hold you back or other people make your life complicated. Take a closer look at your situation and you will understand what's required of you and how you can put your attributes to work for you. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Focus on money, deals, contracts and legalities to bring closure or gains to your world. An opportunity is available to you if you are willing to take a leap of faith. Trust in your judgment, not someone else's. Be confident. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Don't sit back waiting for others to do things for you. There is someone you will meet if you are sincere about doing good things for worthy causes. Be passionate about your beliefs and you will make an impression that will lead to bigger and better opportunities. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): If the opportunity arises to have fun, join in. Don't hold back: You'll connect to someone who will help you get ahead. Focus on fun and entertainment and you will show people your versatility. ✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Take a look at travel options. It's time to dream a little about an exotic destination, so start a travel fund. Pamper yourself and take positive personal action and you will get results. ✪✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Don't let anyone talk you into something you aren't ready to do. You can make some advancement where relationships are concerned if you address issues that concern you. Be determined and show your strength. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Begin talks regarding a partnership with someone you respect. You need to align yourself with an individual who complements your talents. Once you establish a working relationship, everything else will fall into place. ✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Get serious about your future and you will make the right moves. Money is in the picture and will find its way into your pocket if you are serious about what you are doing. Change will be necessary, even if it is difficult to bring about. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Stabilize your life by finding ways to make financial gains that will secure your personal life and future. Speaking from the heart to the people you care about will get the response and the help you require to make your life better. ✪✪✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Nothing will be out in the open but, if you use your intuition, you will get the drift of what's actually going on. It's important to make strategic moves that will allow you to make a more comfortable and workable home environment. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are intelligent, entertaining and quick to react. You are industrious, precise, inventive and imaginative. You always finish what you start.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun,* ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

			3		6			
		8				1		
	2			9			4	
6				3				2
		3	8		5	7		
2				1				4
	1			8			5	
		9				8		
			4		2			

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 2/15

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

4	6	2	1	9	3	7	8	5
1	5	8	6	4	7	9	3	2
3	7	9	2	8	5	4	6	1
5	8	6	4	1	9	3	2	7
7	2	4	3	6	8	1	5	9
9	1	3	7	5	2	6	4	8
8	4	5	9	7	6	2	1	3
6	3	7	5	2	1	8	9	4
2	9	1	8	3	4	5	7	6

Difficulty Level ★★★ 2/14

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

WATER DIVERSION SCHEMES **Solution: 8 letters**

R	L	T	E	C	I	V	R	E	S	(H)	(S)	(I)	(F) C
R	E	I	R	R	A	B	O	E	S	P	S	N	L S
E	N	S	I	E	R	A	H	S	M	N	R	C	O E
S	N	T	O	N	V	C	R	U	U	E	I	H	W S
I	U	R	W	U	T	I	P	R	V	R	M	A	U M
D	F	O	I	I	R	E	D	I	T	S	P	N	R A
E	E	P	D	V	S	C	R	C	T	E	R	N	B D
N	V	X	E	W	M	E	E	C	E	P	O	E	A R
T	O	E	A	A	T	L	E	S	E	I	V	L	N E
I	M	L	E	A	E	R	D	L	T	P	E	A	B E
A	E	R	L	O	I	N	E	B	A	O	T	K	R N
L	T	O	R	D	A	L	I	N	E	R	R	E	I I
S	S	D	E	M	L	A	N	A	C	R	U	A	D G
I	Y	R	E	N	I	H	C	A	M	H	M	R	G N
H	S	D	I	S	C	O	N	N	E	C	T	S	E E

© 2008 Universal Press Syndicate www.wonderword.com 2/15

Barrier, Berms, Bridge, Canal, Channel, Dams, Demand, Disconnect, Ditches, Divert, Drains, Engineer, Export, Fish, Flow, Funnel, Hydroelectric, Improve, Intercept, Isolate, Lake, Liner, Machinery, Move, Pipes, Pumps, Redirect, Residential, Resources, River, Runs, Rural, Service, Share, Storage, Stream, Swale, System, Trench, Urban, Wide

Yesterday's Answer: Embryo

SALE: The topics of "Wonderword for Kids" appeal to younger fans but the puzzle-difficulty matches what you've come to expect from Wonderword. For a limited time, the book is on sale for just $4 each (U.S. funds only), payable to Universal Press Syndicate. Include $3 postage for the first book order, $1 p&h for each additional book. Send to Wonderword, 4520 Main St., Kansas City, Mo. 64111 or call toll-free, 1-800-255-5734, ext. 6688. **Sorry,** no online orders for this special offer.

CLASSIFIED ADS

CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 7-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $25 per 3 liner ad for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of below packages that fits your budget.

ADS (7DAYS)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$25
• 5-Liner	$35
• 3-Liner with picture	$45
• 5-Liner with picture	$55

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

As added service to our valued customers, you may now submit all your JVA placements for announcement/publication in *Saipan Tribune's* print and online edition and KZMI/KCNM at the same time. No more worries of having to go to two different locations every time you need to place job vacancy announcements. Special rates are available for JVA customers under this arrangement.

Print*

• 1st position	$10
• 2nd position	$3
• Succeeding positions	$1

Combo (Print and Online)*

• 1st position	$13
• 2nd position	$4
• Succeeding positions	$2

LOWER RATES! Effective Feb. 3, 2007

Radio (KCNM/KZMI)

• Up to 6 positions	$5
• More than 6 positions	$10

*These rates apply to all vacancy announcements that include corresponding benefits and which announcements are all under the same company name.

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Job Vacancy Announcements

Monday Through Friday Issues: All ads placed before 12 noon will come out the next publication date.

Saturday And Sunday Issues:
- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on either Sunday or Monday issues.
- KCNM/KZMI: All ads placed on Friday (9am to 5pm) will be for Monday's radio announcement.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

Job Vacancy Announcements

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, Saipan Tribune reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

FOR RENT RESIDENTIAL

Apartment For Rent (in Beach Road, Garapan) One (1) Bedroom fully furnished with back-up generator and 24 hour water, washer & dryer facilities in the building. For inquiries, pls. call 322-6183

Apartment room for rent: Fully furnished 1 brm, T/B, 24-hr water $210/month, near Conwood | Tel. 287-1372, 235-6748

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

1 WELL DRILLER (F 13309)
Salary:$4.25/hour. Benefits: Self provided housing; self provided food; workmen's compensation & medical. Contact: Alexander Incorporated dba Alexander Drilling @234-5117.

1 DRESSMAKER (F 13310)
Salary:$3.55-$4.25/hour. Benefits: Medical & workmen's compensation. Contact: YCO Corp. dba YCO TrueValue Hardware/Do It Best Hardware/Liberty Dept. Store/YCO Construction/Appliance Outlets/ Liberty Dept. Store/Naked Fish Bar & Grill/Servistar Motorsports @ 233-3112/3.

1 MAINTENANCE, MECHANIC (F 13311)
Salary:$3.55-$4.25/hour. Benefits: Medical & workmen's compensation. Contact: YCO Corp. dba YCO TrueValue Hardware/Do It Best Hardware/Liberty Dept. Store/YCO Construction/Appliance Outlets/ Liberty Dept. Store/Naked Fish Bar & Grill/Servistar Motorsports @ 233-3112/3.

1 COMPUTER PROGRAMMER (F 13312)
Salary:$3.55-$4.25/hour. Benefits: Medical & workmen's compensation. Contact: YCO Corp. dba YCO TrueValue Hardware/Do It Best Hardware/Liberty Dept. Store/YCO Construction/Appliance Outlets/ Liberty Dept. Store/Naked Fish Bar & Grill/Servistar Motorsports @ 233-3112/3.

1 PAINT MIXER (F 13313)
Salary:$3.55-$4.25/hour. Benefits: Medical & workmen's compensation. Contact: YCO Corp. dba YCO TrueValue Hardware/Do It Best Hardware/Liberty Dept. Store/YCO Construction/Appliance Outlets/ Liberty Dept. Store/Naked Fish Bar & Grill/Servistar Motorsports @ 233-3112/3.

WHATZIT Solution:
A cut above the rest

1 WAITER/WAITRESS (F 13314)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; free food while on duty; employer to provide medical insurance & workmans compensation. Contact: Kingfisher Corporation dba Kingfisher Golflinks @322-1100.

1 ESTIMATOR, JEWELRY (F 13315)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self provided housing; self provided food; workmen's compensation & medical. Contact: Alexander Incorporated dba Fastcash Pawnshop @234-5117.

1 KITCHEN HELPER (F 13316)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Workman compensation & medical insurance. Contact: Auntie Mag's Food & Catering dba Auntie Mag's Food & Catering @288-4799.

12 COMMERCIAL (SERVICES) CLEANERS (F 13317)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Workmen compensation & medical provided. Contact: Sablan Topline Company, LLC. @235-5206.

1 HOUSEWORKER (F 13318)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: $100.00/deduct housing; $100.00/ deduct food & medical. Contact: John S. Blanco @234-6138.

1 GENERAL MANAGER (13319)
Salary:$650.00-$2,000.00/monthly. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation provided. Contact: Mega Power Corporation dba Atoll Divers & Tours Services. @483-6284.

1 AUTO BODY REPAIRER (F 13320)
Salary:$4.50/hour. Benefits: Workers compensation insurance & medical. Contact: Motion Automotive Repair CTR. @235-3481.

1 BUILDING MAINTENANCE REPAIRER (F 13321)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation insurance. Contact: Motion Automotive Repair CTR. @235-3481.

1 AUTO ELECTRICIAN (F 13322)
Salary:$3.55-$4.50/hour. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation insurance. Contact: Motion Automotive Repair CTR. @235-3481.

1 TOUR COORDINATOR (F 13323)
Salary:$3.55-$4.05/hour. Benefits: $50.00-$350.00/housing allowance monthly; workers compensation & medical expenses company provided. Contact: HIS Saipan Inc. @234-7053.

1 CONTROLLER (F 13324)
Salary:$700.00-$1,982.00/monthly. Benefits: $10.00-$50.00/gas allowance monthly; $50.00-$350.00/ housing allowance monthly; workers compensation & medical expenses company provided. Contact: HIS Saipan Inc. @234-7053.

1 STEWARD (F 13325)
Salary:$3.55-$4.00/hour. Benefits: $30.00/housing monthly; free food; workers compensation & medical coverage. Contact: World Corporation dba Saipan World Resort @234-5900.

1 CARGO HANDLER (F 13326)
Salary:$3.55-$4.10/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; workmen's compensation provided & medical. Contact: Pacific Oriental Inc. @288-0360 to 0362.

WANTED
2 COOKS
Expert in International & Japanese Cuisine.
Please call Seastar Restaurant @ 235-6848 or 483-6848

SMALL ENGINE REPAIR
LAUNDRY REPAIR
Lawn Mower · Generator Repair
Boat Engine · Bush Cutter Repair
Motor Bike · Rewinding
233-5641
Open 7 Day a Week 9:00 AM-9:00 PM

WANTED AVON REPRESENTATIVE
and earn 30% up to 50%
for more information please call
Jocelyn Jeter
@ 287-9300 C • 483-1097 C
jeter_joy@yahoo.com

HAIRSTYLIST/BEAUTICIAN
WANTED
Call 235-1425 RAY/NANCY

Commercial Space & Room for Rent
- 4000 sq.ft. commercial space, good for warehouse (previously rented to Mingli Wholesale), auto-shop, day-care, office, etc. Located in Chalan Laulau between Middle Rd. & Beach Rd. Back of Triple J Auto.
- Room from $80-$140/mo. behind Triple J Auto on Beach Rd. near to XO Market & H-Mart.

Call Ivan @ 235-0479, 285-9966, 9:00am - 6:00pm

NOTICE

TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF THE PROGRAM AND HOUSING DIVISION

(January 18, 2008)

TO: SECTION 8 LANDLORDS AND TENANTS

This is to inform you that the Program and Housing Division (PHD) will be closed on the Week of **February 18 to February 22, 2008** due to Monday; February 18, 2008 being a legal CNMI holiday (President's Day) followed by off-island training scheduled for the entire PHD staff that will occur during the remainder of the week.

Your usual cooperation and understanding is greatly appreciated.

WHATZIT?™

Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

incision siesta

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Find today's solution in this section

Notice of Zoning Board Meeting

The regular monthly meeting of the Zoning Board has been changed to Thursday, February 21, 2008 at 6:00 pm. in the 2nd floor Conference Room of the Department of Public Lands, Joeten Building, DanDan. The public is invited to attend. The agenda will include:

A. Preliminary Matters: Call to Order, Roll Call, Adoption of Agenda, Adoption of Minutes, Communications
B. Reports: Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Administrator, Committees, Legal Counsel
C. Contested Cases
D. Old Business - None
E. New Business
   1. Review and approve changes to the OIA grant scope of work and budget
   2. Technical corrections to SLL 15-29 for discussion
   3. Board Order regarding review of temporary permits.
   4. Resolution to amend permit fees
   5. Resolution to establish adult business zones
F. Public Comment
G. Executive (Closed) Session - Consult with Legal Counsel regarding pending or anticipated legal matters
H. Miscellaneous: Other Matters, Announcements, Next Meeting. Adjourn

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the Board meeting, or if you require assistance, please contact Steve Tilley, Zoning Administrator at 234-9663. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq. & 10 CMC 3511, et seq.).

/s/ Henry S. Hofschneider, Chair.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

1 MAINT. MECH. (F 13327)
Salary:$3.55-$4.95/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; workmen's compensation provided & medical. Contact: Pacific Oriental Inc. @288-0360 to 0362.

1 MANAGER, PASSENGER SERVICE (F 13328)
Salary:$1,972.00-$2,200.00/monthly. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; workmen's compensation provided & medical. Contact: Pacific Oriental Inc. @288-0360 to 0362.

1 ACCOUNTANT (MANAGER) (F 13329)
Salary:$1,972.00-$2,169.20/monthly. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; workmen's compensation provided & medical. Contact: Pacific Oriental Inc. @288-0360 to 0362.

1 (CABIN SERVICE AGENT) CLEANER II (F 13330)
Salary:$3.55-$4.45/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; workmen's compensation provided & medical. Contact: Pacific Oriental Inc. @288-0360 to 0362.

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1 MANAGER, ACCOUNTING (F 13331)
Salary:$1,900.00-$2,337.50/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food & workmen's compensation provided. Contact: Century Insurance Co., Ltd. @234-0609.

1 ACCOUNTANT (F 13332)
Salary:$3.55-$6.35/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food & workmen's compensation provided. Contact: Century Insurance Co., Ltd. @234-0609.

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1 MANAGER, ACCOUNTING I (F 13333)
Salary:$1,200.00-$2,585.00/monthly. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; medical & workmen's compensation provided. Contact: Century Finance Co., Ltd. @236-2740/236-2741.

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1 ACCOUNTANT (F 13334)
Salary:$3.55-$8.00/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; medical & workmen's compensation provided. Contact: Consol. Trans. Serv. Inc. @322-1690 (L. Base)/234-2808 (Air).

1 CLERK, DOCUMENTATION BILL (F 13335)
Salary:$3.55-$4.40/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; medical & workmen's compensation provided. Contact: Consol. Trans. Serv. Inc. @322-1690 (L. Base)/234-2808 (Air).

1 MANAGER (F 13336)
Salary:$1,200.00-$2,310.00/monthly. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; medical & workmen's compensation provided. Contact: Consol. Trans. Serv. Inc. @322-1690 (L. Base)/234-2808 (Air).

1 MANAGER, GENERAL (F 13337)
Salary:$1,200.00-$3,080.00/monthly. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; medical & workmen's compensation provided. Contact: Consol. Trans. Serv. Inc. @322-1690 (L. Base)/234-2808 (Air).

1 ACCOUNTANT (F 13338)
Salary:$3.55-$5.85/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; medical & workmen's compensation provided. Contact: Consol. Trans. Serv. Inc. @322-1690 (L. Base)/234-2808 (Air).

1 SUPERVISOR, UNLOADING/LOADING (F 13339)
Salary:$3.55-$4.70/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; medical & workmen's compensation provided. Contact: Consol. Trans. Serv. Inc. @322-1690 (L. Base)/234-2808 (Air).

1 WAITRESS/WAITER (F 13340)
Salary:$3.05/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; food not provided; medical & workmen's compensation provided. Contact: Segundo G. Posadas dba Segundo's Delicious BBQ/Catering Services @233-1246.

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1 WAITRESS/WAITER (F 13341)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: $100.00/housing; 2duty meals; shared cost medical insurance; vacation leave & workers compensation. Contact: WDI Saipan, Inc. dba Tony Roma's/Capricciosa @322-7516.

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1 SUPERVISOR (PARTS) (F 13342)
Salary:$6.65-$6.90/hour. Benefits: Free housing if no A/C; medical insurance; vacation leave & workers compensation. Contact: Triple J Saipan, Inc. @234-1795.

1 COMPUTER SYSTEMS ANALYST (F 13343)
Salary:$461.54/bi-weekly. Benefits: Free housing if no A/C; medical insurance; vacation leave & workers compensation. Contact: Triple J Saipan, Inc. @234-1795.

1 MAINTENANCE (BUILDING) REPAIRER (F 13344)
Salary:$4.65-$4.90/hour. Benefits: Free housing if no A/C; medical insurance; vacation leave & workers compensation. Contact: Triple J Saipan, Inc. @234-1795.

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1 ELECTRICAL ENGR-DESIGN (F 13345)
Salary:$2,400.00/monthly. Benefits: $300.00/housing; $200.00/food; staywell insurance; medical & workmen's compensation. Contact: EMC2 Electrical, Inc. dba EMCE @233-3081.

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1 ELECTRONIC TECH. (F 13346)
Salary:$3.75/hour. Benefits: Medical & worksman compensation will be provided. Contact: Choice Radio Inc. dba I-Connect @235-0168.

1 SALES MANAGER (F 13347)
Salary:$4.12/hour. Benefits: Medical & worksman compensation will be provided. Contact: Choice Radio Inc. dba I-Connect @235-0168.

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1 ELECTRONIC TECHNICIAN (MANAGER) (F 13348)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; medical & workers compensation provided by employer. Contact: Joseph J.A. Pablo dba 3 G's Service @235-7069.

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1 SALES REPRESENTATIVE (F 13349)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; medical & workmen's compensation provided by employer. Contact: Cheng Xiang Corporation @287-3067.

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1 MAINTENANCE BUILDING REPAIRER (F 13350)
Salary:$3.55-$5.00/hour. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation. Contact: Pacific Entertainment Corp. dba Club Chicago @234-7900.

7 DANCER (F 13351)
Salary:$3.55-$3.75/hour. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation. Contact: Pacific Entertainment Corp. dba Club Chicago @234-7900.

1 WAITRESS (F 13352)
Salary:$3.55-$3.75/hour. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation. Contact: Pacific Entertainment Corp. dba Club Chicago @234-7900.

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1 COMMERCIAL CLEANER (F 13353)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self provided housing; self provided food; workmens compensation insurance & medical provided. Contact: Samkor Inc. dba Samkor Congregate @322-0072.

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1 MANAGER (F 13354)
Salary:$650.00-$800.00/monthly. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation provided. Contact: Jee Hyun Corporation dba K2 Travel @483-6322.

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1 COMMERCIAL CLEANER (F 13355)
Salary:$3.05/hour. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation provided. Contact: Ju Young Corporation dba O Sun Gift Shop II @483-3934.

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1 MANAGER (F 13356)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self provided housing; self provided food; workers compensation & medical. Contact: Qizhao Zhen dba Kangda Market @288-0234.

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1 DRESSMAKER (F 13357)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical & workmen's compensation. Contact: Emmy F. Larinay dba D&A Dress Shop @322-6950.

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1 BUILDING MAINTENANCE REPAIRER (F 13358)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Employer provided housing with $32.50/monthly charge; medical & workmen's compensation. Contact: Fuji Pacific Inc. @234-0583.

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1 YARD WORKER (F 13359)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Workmen's compensation insurance & medical benefit. Contact: Ramon M. San Nicolas dba Bo's Yard & Lawn Service @287-0626.

1 YARD WORKER (F 13360)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self provided food; workmen's compensation insurance. Contact: Ramon M. San Nicolas dba Bo's Yard & Lawn Service @287-0626.

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1 SALES CLERK (F 13361)
Salary:$3.05/hour. Benefits: Self provided housing; self provided food; medical & workmen compensation. Contact: Shoji Saito dba Pormang Pinoy @235-4424.

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1 HOUSEWORKER (F 13362)
Salary:$3.55-$4.05/hour. Benefits: $100.00/deductible housing; $100.00/deductible food & medical provided. Contact: Joseph R. Motto @287-3900.

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1 PLUMBER (F 13363)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Workers compensation by employer; free transportation to & from the job site; medical insurance 80% by employer and 20% by employee & free housing. Contact: Quad L's Company dba Lifoifoi Building @322-6183.

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5 SEWING MACHINE OPERATOR (F 13364)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; medical expenses as required by 3CMC S4437/work compensation. Contact: Shao Hong Xia Jones dba Beauty Boutique & Dress Shop @287-8206.

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1 MAINTENANCE (GROUND) (F 13365)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self provided food; medical & workmen's compensation insurance provided. Contact: Samkor Inc. dba Samkor Congregate @322-0072.

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2 WAITER/WAITRESS (F 13366)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self housing; self food; medical provided & workers compensation. Contact: S&D Corporation dba Monte Carlo @235-9147.

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1 HOUSEWORKER (F 13367)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Company provided housing at a charge $77.92/monthly; workers compensation & medical. Contact: Mayumi Nakadai @233-7737.

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1 HOUSEWORKER (F 13368)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: $100.00/housing; $100.00/food & medical. Contact: Trinidad S. Diaz @236-9805/287-9675.

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1 PLUMBER (F 13369)
Salary:$3.55-$4.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; workmen's compensation & medical. Contact: L&T International Corp. @322-1690.

1 COMPUTER PROGRAMMER (F 13370)
Salary:$3.55-$5.50/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; workmen's compensation & medical. Contact: L&T International Corp. @322-1690.

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3 SECURITY OFFICER (F 13371)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Workers compensation. Contact: Aurelia G. Long dba Paradise Security Services @433-2274.

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1 MASON (F 13372)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Housing free & self provided food. Contact: David M./Daria Cing dba Cing's Enterprises.

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1 ASSISTANT MANAGER (F 13373)
Salary:$700.00-$3,700.00/monthly. Benefits: Workers compensation & medical expenses company provided. Contact: HIS Saipan, Inc. @234-7053.

1 ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER (F 13374)
Salary:$700.00-$2,530.00/monthly. Benefits: $10.00-$50.00/gas allowance; $50.00-$350.00/monthly housing; workers compensation & medical expenses company provided. Contact: HIS Saipan, Inc. @234-7053.

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2 WAITRESS/WAITER (F 13375)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Workers compensation & medical expenses company provided. Contact: Jonny's Corporation @233-9019.

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1 (SCUBA DIVING) INSTRUCTOR SPORTS (F 13376)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical expenses & workers compensation employer provided. Contact: Open Knowledge System Inc. @322-6963.

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1 AUTO-MECHANIC (F 13377)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation. Contact: PCC Corporation @235-3048/233-5281.

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1 MATERIAL COORDINATOR (F 13378)
Salary:$3.55-$4.50/hour. Benefits: Medical & workman compensation provided. Contact: Guangdong Dev. Co., Ltd. @288-2288.

INVITATION FOR BIDS
WATER TASK FORCE
IFB08-GOV-042

Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lieutenant Governor Timothy P. Villagomez, through the CNMI Water Task Force, are soliciting sealed bids for the **CAPITOL HILL 1.0 MILLION GALLON RESERVOIR REHABILITATION PROJECT** in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

A bid guarantee of 15 percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security may be in certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company licensed to do business in the CNMI.

The Contractor will be required to submit payment and performance bonds from a U.S. Treasury listed company. The Contractor will also be required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal laws including the Davis Bacon Act.

The project consists, in general, but is not limited to:

1. General cleaning of the interior of the tank, including removal of all accumulated sediments on the floor of the tank. Sediments to be disposed of at an acceptable location such as the Marpi Sanitary Landfill.
2. General cleaning of the tank exterior, including the removal of all plant growth on the roof, water blasting of the tank exterior and removal of all debris.
3. Mobilization for the interior and exterior painting including the demolition and removal of existing appurtenances and accessories, and the installation of new accessories as specified in Section 10200, including interior and exterior ladders, drying of the interior of the tank, patching cracks and crevices, and sand blasting where required for a smooth surface. The tank floor may require patching or a topping of concrete.
4. Painting the interior and exterior surfaces. The specifications Section 09810 for the exterior coating and Section 09800 for the interior coating storage pond, specify a particular painting product and paint system, but the specifications allow the contractor to bid an "or equal", paint system. The paint system bid must be an integrated system whereby the manufacturer certifies and warranties the product for a minimum of five years. The painting system shall be compatible with the surface preparation products and be acceptable by the US EPA for use in a potable water reservoir.
5. Periodic inspections, verification of paint thicknesses and leak testing as well as the final clean-up shall be considered a part of the total contract performance. All records shall be turned over to the Project Engineer upon completion and acceptance of the work.

A non-refundable payment of $150 is required for each set of Plans, Specifications, and Proposal Forms, available on or after February 20, 2008 at the Water Task Force Office, Capitol Hill, Saipan. A mandatory pre-bid conference for this project is scheduled at 10:00 a.m., on March 5, 2008, at the WTF Conference Room, Saipan. A project site visit is included as a part of the pre-bid meeting.

All inquiries shall be in writing and address to Pedro Sasamoto, Program Manager, Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950 or fax to (670) 664-2279, no later than. March 7, 2008.

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, dated May 24, 2001, except Article 7, "Local Business Preference", amended by Public Laws 15-95 and Public Law 15-118, is not available to local bidders in this procurement because its use is prohibited by the Federal law granting the funds for this project.

Sealed bids shall be identified on outside of the envelope by Invitation for Bids No. IFB08-GOV-042. An original and four copies of the bid must be submitted to the Procurement and Supply Office, Lower Base, Saipan before 3:00 pm, on, March 17, 2008. Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for the receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to bid. Notices of Intent to Bid must be received by the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than 3:00 pm local time, March 17, 2008, and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via email to procurement@pticom.com. For bidders outside the CNMI, an original and four copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service, the official government postal service of a foreign country, or a commercial courier, no later than March 17, 2008, and must be received no later than March 27, 2008. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, at 3:00 pm, local time March 28, 2008. However, if no Notices of Intent to bid were received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will be opened at 3:00 pm, local time on March 18, 2008.

This project is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), under its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) provided to the Commonwealth. This project is also sub) . ect to Section 3 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1968 which requires recipients of HUD funds and contractors to help insure that the economic opportunities generated by these HUD funds are provided to local low-income residents and the businesses that serve them "to the maximum extent feasible".

All bidders are hereby notified that the CNMI Government will affirmatively insure that in any contract entered into pursuant to this solicitation, women and small business enterprises will be afforded full opportunity to submit proposals and will not be discriminated against on grounds of race, color, national origin, political affiliation, creed, sex, religion, age, familial status, and disability status.

All bid documents received shall become the sole property of the CNMI Government. The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid proposal that does not affect the elements of price, quantity, and delivery of the bid, in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

/s/ Timothy P. Villagomez
Lieutenant Governor/Contracting Officer

/s/ Herman S. Sablan
Director, Procurement and Supply

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

Invitation For Bid
IFB 08-023

The CNMI Public School System and the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) are soliciting competitive sealed bids for the **Construction of Building "J" to be located at Marianas High School, Saipan.**

Detailed information on the scope of work and specifications are available, for a fee, at Pacific Quick Print & Post located in Middle Road, Garapan, Saipan. **All interested bidders, prior to obtaining copies of the detailed information, shall register with the PSS Office of Procurement & Supply.**

All bids shall be in a sealed envelope face marked "IFB 08-023" containing (1) original and five (5) copies and submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office no later than March 4, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. Responsibility Determination documents shall be placed in a separate envelope marked "IFB 08-023, CONFIDENTIAL - Responsibility Determination" (1-original and one copy). Any bid after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstance.

Bidders are advised that this project is subject to compliance with the Davis-Bacon Act and the labor standard provisions for wage rate determination of the Commonwealth. All labor on the project shall be paid no less than the minimum wage rate of $ 3.55 per hour which took effect on July 25, 2007 as established by Federal law including subsequent increases of $.50 per hour that is scheduled to take effect on May 26, 2008 and extending further, until the hourly rate equals that of the Federal Minimum Wage of $ 7.50 per hour.

Bidding procedures shall be in compliance with CNMI Public School System Procurement Regulations. Article 7, "Local Business Preference", as amended by Public Law 15-95 and as further amended by Public Law 15-118, is not available to local bidders in this procurement because its use is prohibited by the Federal law granting the funding for this project.

This project is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), under its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) provided to the Commonwealth. This project is also subject to Section 3 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1968 which requires recipients of HUD funds and the Contractors to help insure that the economic opportunities generated by these funds are provided to local low-income residents and the businesses that serve them "to the maximum extent feasible."

The CNMI Public School System hereby notifies bidders that it will affirmatively insure that in any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, women and small business enterprises will be afforded full opportunity to submit proposals and will not be discriminated against on grounds of race, color, national origin, political affiliation, creed, sex, religion, age, familial status, and disability status.

Pursuant to the Governor's Directive 251 dated March 15, 2006, bidders are required to include a Clearance from the Office of the Insurance Commissioner with respect to the financial bonding capability of the bidders' chosen Surety.

Performance time for completion of this project is One Hundred Sixty (160) Calendar days beginning with the date of Notice to Proceed. The Contractor shall pay to the CNMI Public School System the greater sum of **U.S. $100.00 per day (One Hundred Dollars), or 2% of the total contract price divided by the number of calendar days of the contract time**, not as a penalty, but as reasonable liquidated damages for failing, neglecting, or refusing to complete the work within the time herein specified, and said sums shall be paid for each consecutive calendar day that the Contractor shall be in default beyond the time stipulated for completing the work.

A pre-bid conference will be held at the PSS Conference Room, 3rd Floor NMI Retirement Fund Building, on February 22, 2008 at 10:00 a.m.

Technical questions shall be in writing and addressed to Mr. Carl Dela Cruz, Acting Procurement & Supply Officer, via fax # (670) 664-3791. Alternatively, questions may be e-mailed to the following address: **delacruzc@pss.cnmi.mp**.

The Public School System reserves the right to award single or multiple awards or to reject any or all bids, in whole or in part, if to do so is in the best interest of the Public School System.

All bids shall become the property of the CNMI Public School System.

/S/ Dr. David M. Borja, D.B.A.
Commissioner of Education

/S/ Manuel A. Sablan
NMHC Board Chairman

/S/ Carl Dela Cruz, M.B.A.
Acting P&S Officer

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

Invitation For Bid
IFB 08-024

The Public School System and the CNMI State Board of Education are soliciting competitive sealed bids for the renovation of the following PSS Head Start Centers:

1. **Tanapag Head Start**
2. **W.S. Reyes Head Start (BLDG. B)**

Detailed information on the scope of work and specifications are available, for a fee, at Pacific Quick Print & Post located in Middle Road, Garapan, Saipan. **All interested bidders, prior to obtaining copies of the detailed information, shall register with the PSS Office of Procurement & Supply.**

The PSS Office of Procurement & Supply is located on the 3rd Floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capital Hill Area, Saipan, MP 96950.

All bids shall be in a sealed envelope face marked "IFB 08-024" containing (1) original and five (5) copies and submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office no later than March 18, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. Responsibility Determination documents shall be placed in a separate envelope mark-ed "IFB 08-024, CONFIDENTIAL - Responsibility Determination" (1-original and one copy). Any bid after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstance.

A mandatory pre-bid conference will be held at the PSS Conference Room, 3rd Floor NMI Retirement Fund Building, on February 28, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. Site visits, to be scheduled, are mandatory. Scheduled dates and times are subject to change.

General inquiries shall be directed to Mr. Juan Babauta at telephone number 237-3062. Technical questions shall be in writing and addressed to Mr. Carl Dela Cruz, Acting Procurement & Supply Officer, via fax # (670) 664-3791. Alternatively, questions may be e-mailed to the following address: **delacruzc@pss.cnmi.mp**.

Contractors are required to submit with their bid, a copy of their valid CNMI Business License.

All bids shall become the property of the Public School System.

/S/ Dr. David M. Borja, D.B.A.
Commissioner of Education

/S/ Carl Dela Cruz, M.B.A.
Acting P & S Officer

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

Invitation For Bid
IFB 08-016

The CNMI Public School System and the CNMI State Board of Education are soliciting competitive sealed bids for the purchase, delivery, and installation of **Desktop Computers, Laptops, and Accessories for the following schools and program:**

1. **Head Start**
2. **Marianas High School**
3. **William S. Reyes Elementary School**

Detailed information on the Scope of Work is available at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office located on the 3rd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950.

All bids shall be placed in a sealed envelope face marked "IFB 08-016" containing one (1) original and three (3) copies and shall be submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office no later than March 3, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. Responsibility determination documents shall be placed in separate envelope marked "IFB 08-016, CONFIDENTIAL - Responsibility determination" (1-original and 1-copy). Any bid after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstance.

Technical questions shall be in writing and addressed to Mr. Carl de la Cruz, Acting Procurement & Supply Officer via fax # (670) 664-3791. Alternatively, technical questions may be e-mailed to the following address: **delacruzc@pss.cnmi.mp.** Questions shall be submitted no later than ten (10) calendar days prior to the submission deadline.

The Public School System reserves the right to award single or multiple awards or to reject any or all bids if to do so is in the best interest of the Public School System.

All bids shall become the property of the Public School System.

General inquiries to this announcement may be directed to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office at telephone numbers 237-3062 / 3035.

/S/ Dr. David M. Borja, D.B.A.
Commissioner of Education

/S/ Carl F. de la Cruz, M.B.A.
Acting P & S Officer

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

Invitation For Bid
IFB 08-022

The Public School System (PSS) and the CNMI State Board of Education are soliciting competitive sealed bids for the P**urchase and Delivery of One (1) Pick-Up Truck for Hopwood Junior High School.**

Detailed information on the Scope of Work is available at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office located on the 3rd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950.

All bids shall be in a sealed envelope face marked "IFB 08-022" containing (1) original and three (3) copies and submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office no later than March 3, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. Responsibility Determination documents shall be placed in a separate envelope marked "IFB 08-022, CONFIDENTIAL - Responsibility Determination" (1-original and 1-copy). Any bid after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstance.

Technical questions must be in writing and addressed to Mr. Carl de la Cruz, Acting Procurement & Supply Officer, via fax # (670) 664-3791. Alternatively, technical questions may be e-mailed to the following address: **delacruzc@pss.cnmi.mp**. Technical questions, in order to ensure consideration, should be submitted no later than ten (10) business days prior to the deadline for submission of bids.

General inquiries may be directed to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office at telephone numbers 237-3068 / 3035.

The Public School System reserves the right to award single or multiple awards or to reject any or all bids, in whole or in part, if to do so is in the best interest of the Public School System.

All bids shall become the property of the Public School System.

/S/ Dr. David M. Borja, D.B.A.
Commissioner of Education

/S/ Carl F. de la Cruz, M.B.A.
Acting P & S Officer

Clemens takes his lumps on Capitol Hill

WASHINGTON (AP)—Roger Clemens stuck out his famous right arm, the one that earned 354 major league wins, seven Cy Young Awards, $160 million, and pointed in the direction of his accuser. Without looking at Brian McNamee, Clemens told Congress, "I have strong disagreements with what this man says about me."

Separated by only a few feet at a wooden witness table Wednesday, Clemens and McNamee were never further apart.

There they sat, the star pitcher and his former personal trainer, under oath and facing blistering questions. For 4 1/2 hours, both men held to their versions of the he-said, he-said disagreement over whether McNamee injected Clemens with steroids and human growth hormone.

Clemens insisted it never happened. McNamee insisted it did.

His reputation and Hall of Fame candidacy potentially at stake not to mention the possibility of criminal charges, should he lie—Clemens said: "I have never taken steroids or HGH. No matter what we discuss here today, I am never going to have my name restored."

For some members of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Clemens' denials rang hollow, particularly in light of a new account of his discussion of HGH use, revealed by his friend and former teammate Andy Pettitte in a sworn affidavit.

"It's hard to believe you, sir," Rep. Elijah Cummings, D-Md., told Clemens. "I hate to say that. You're one of my heroes. But it's hard to believe."

Clemens and McNamee, by all accounts once good friends, rarely glanced at one another. When Clemens did turn to his right, it was with the Rocket's mound glare. Seated between them was the day's third witness, Charles Scheeler, a lawyer who helped compile the report on drug use in baseball headed by former Senate majority leader George Mitchell.

"Someone is lying in spectacular fashion," said Rep. Tom Davis of Virginia, the committee's ranking Republican.

Just like their stories, Clemens' Texas drawl was in strong contrast to the clipped cadences of McNamee, a former New York police officer.

"I told the investigators I injected three people—two of whom I know confirmed my account," McNamee said. "The third is sitting at this table."

Ultimately, the matter could wind up with the Justice Department if prosecutors believe either man made false statements. The Justice Department is also reviewing used needles and bloody gauze pads McNamee turned over. His side says the items contained performance-enhancing drugs and Clemens' DNA.

"We found conflicts and inconsistencies in Mr. Clemens' accounts," said Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Calif., the committee's chairman. "During his deposition, he made statements we know are untrue."

Eventually, the committee split largely along party lines, with the Democrats reserving their most pointed queries for Clemens, and the Republicans giving McNamee a rougher time.

"You're here under oath, and yet we have lie after lie after lie after lie," Rep. Dan Burton, R-Ind., told McNamee.

AP

Former New York Yankees baseball pitcher Roger Clemens, left, listens to the testimony of his former personal trainer Brian McNamee, right, on Capitol Hill in Washington, Wednesday, Feb. 13, 2008 during the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee hearing on drug use in baseball.

Rep. Christopher Shays, R-Conn., repeatedly called McNamee a "drug dealer."

One of McNamee's lawyers, Earl Ward, called it a "public flogging."

Waxman said afterward he hadn't "reached any conclusions" as to whether a criminal investigation is warranted, although several congressmen said a referral from the committee isn't needed to trigger one.

The session, held on the same day pitchers and catchers started reporting for spring training in Florida and Arizona, came exactly two months following the release of the Mitchell Report.

That investigation was prompted by another hearing on steroids held by the same committee in the same wood-paneled room, on March 17, 2005. That is best remembered for having tarnished the reputations of Mark McGwire—who infamously repeated, "I'm not here to talk about the past"—and Rafael Palmeiro—who wagged his finger and declared he never had used steroids, then failed a drug test months later.

In a reference to that day, Rep. Mark Souder, R-Ind., cautioned Clemens and McNamee: "It's better not to talk about the past than to lie about the past."

Wednesday's hearing, which Waxman indicated would be his committee's last on the subject, was prompted by Clemens' various and vigorous denials of what McNamee told Mitchell. The Mitchell Report was the first public accounting of McNamee's allegations that he injected Clemens with HGH and steroids 16 to 21 times from 1998 to 2001. McNamee said Wednesday he now thinks those numbers are too low.

"They don't disagree on a phone call or one meeting," Waxman said. "If Mr. McNamee is lying, he has acted inexcusably and he has made Mr. Clemens an innocent victim. If Mr. Clemens isn't telling the truth, then he is acting shamefully and has smeared Mr. McNamee. I don't think there is anything in between."

Waxman said he considered calling off the hearing, but said he was persuaded to go forth by Clemens' lawyers, an account they disputed. He also accused Clemens of possibly trying to influence statements to the committee by the pitcher's former nanny.

Congressmen noted that Pettitte and another former Yankees teammate of Clemens, Chuck Knoblauch, both acknowledged that McNamee was correct when he said they used performance enhancers.

At times, Clemens struggled to find the right words as he was pressed by lawmakers. Clemens said Pettitte "misremembers" things. He mispronounced McNamee's name at one point. Toward the end, Clemens raised his voice to interrupt Waxman's closing remarks. The chairman pounded his gavel and said, "Excuse me, but this is not your time to argue with me."

It seemed clear early the committee would not treat Clemens with kid gloves, despite face-to-face meetings he did with representatives in recent days - sometimes posing for photos or signing autographs for staff members.

There was one wide-eyed fan moment, when Rep. William Clay, D-Mo., relayed to Clemens that a colleague "wants to know what uniform will you wear into the Hall of Fame?"

When it was over, Clemens shook hands with Davis, then left through a back door.

Clemens later told reporters: "I'm very thankful and very grateful for this day to come. I'm glad for the opportunity finally. And, you know, I hope I get—and I know I will have—the opportunity to come here to Washington again under different terms."

His wife, Debbie, sat in the front row behind him and listened as Waxman implicated her in HGH use, citing statements by Pettitte. Clemens testified his wife took HGH once, although according to the transcript of last week's sworn deposition, Clemens told committee lawyers he didn't know of family members taking HGH.

IRS Special Agent Jeff Novitzky, a key member of the team prosecuting Barry Bonds, watched from a second-row seat. Bonds, baseball's home run king, was indicted in November on charges of perjury and obstruction of justice stemming from his 2003 testimony to a grand jury in which he denied knowingly using performance-enhancing drugs.

Pettitte, who was excused Monday from testifying, said in a statement to the committee that Clemens told him nearly 10 years ago that he used HGH. Waxman read from affidavits by Pettitte and his wife, Laura, supporting the accusations.

"Andy Pettitte is my friend. He was my friend before this. He will be my friend after this and again. I think Andy has misheard," Clemens said. "I think he misremembers."

In his deposition, Pettitte also said that in 2003 or 2004, McNamee told him Clemens had used steroids. Committee lawyers asked Pettitte how he decided what to say, given that he was caught between conflicting accounts from two friends.

"I have to live with myself. And one day, I have to give an account to God—and not to nobody else—of what I've done in my life," Pettitte replied. "And that's why I've said and shared the stuff with y'all that I've shared with y'all today—that I wouldn't like to share with y'all."

Portions of that transcript and others were shown on flat-panel TVs on walls in the room. It was jarring in black and white.

Specter: Belichick was taping since 2000

WASHINGTON (AP)—Bill Belichick has been illegally taping opponents' defensive signals since he became the New England Patriots' coach in 2000, according to Sen. Arlen Specter, who said NFL commissioner Roger Goodell told him that during a meeting Wednesday.

"There was confirmation that there has been taping since 2000, when Coach Belichick took over," Specter said.

Specter said Goodell gave him that information during the 1-hour, 40-minute meeting, which was requested by Specter so the commissioner could explain his reasons for destroying the Spygate tapes and notes.

"There were a great many questions answered by Commissioner Goodell," Specter, the senior Republican on the Senate Judiciary Committee, told reporters after the meeting. "I found a lot of questions unanswerable because of the tapes and notes had been destroyed."

Goodell said Belichick told him he believed the taping was legal; Goodell said he did not concur.

"He said that's always been his interpretation since he's been the head coach," the commissioner said. "We are going to agree to disagree on the facts."

Specter, from Pennsylvania, wants to talk to other league officials about what exactly was taped and which games may have been compromised.

"We have a right to have honest football games," he said.

Goodell noted that "we were the ones that disclosed" the Patriots' illegal taping of the New York Jets' defensive signals in Week 1 of last season. Further, Goodell said, they had an admission by Belichick.

"I have nothing to hide," Goodell said.

Goodell also told Specter that that he doesn't regret destroying the Spygate tapes or the notes.

"I think it was the right thing to do," Goodell said.

Still, Specter wants to know why penalties were imposed on Belichick before the full extent of the wrongdoing was known and the tapes destroyed in a two-week span. Asked if he thinks there was a coverup, Specter demurred.

"There was an enormous amount of haste," Specter said.

He scoffed at the reasons Goodell gave for destroying the tapes and notes, particularly about trying to keep them out of competitors' hands and because Belichick had admitted to the taping.

"What's that got to do with it? There's an admission of guilt, you preserve the evidence," Specter said. As for keeping the tapes out of the hands of others: "All you have to do is lock up the tapes."

Belichick was fined $500,000 and the team was fined $250,000 because of the Spygate incident. The Patriots also forfeited a first-round draft pick.

Specter has questioned the quality of the NFL's investigation into the matter and raised the possibility of congressional hearings if he wasn't satisfied with Goodell's answers. Specter also raised the threat of Congress canceling the league's antitrust exemption and reiterated that in the meeting with Goodell.

Goodell also said he has not heard from Matt Walsh, the former Patriots employee who performed some videotaping duties for the team.

Walsh told The Associated Press last week during the Pro Bowl in Hawaii that he couldn't talk about allegations that he taped a walkthrough practice by the St. Louis Rams before the 2002 Super Bowl. New England, a two-touchdown underdog, won that game 20-17.

Goodell said he has offered Walsh a deal whereby "he has to tell the truth and he has to return anything he took improperly" in return for indemnity. Specter said he, too, wanted to talk to Walsh and perhaps offer a different deal.

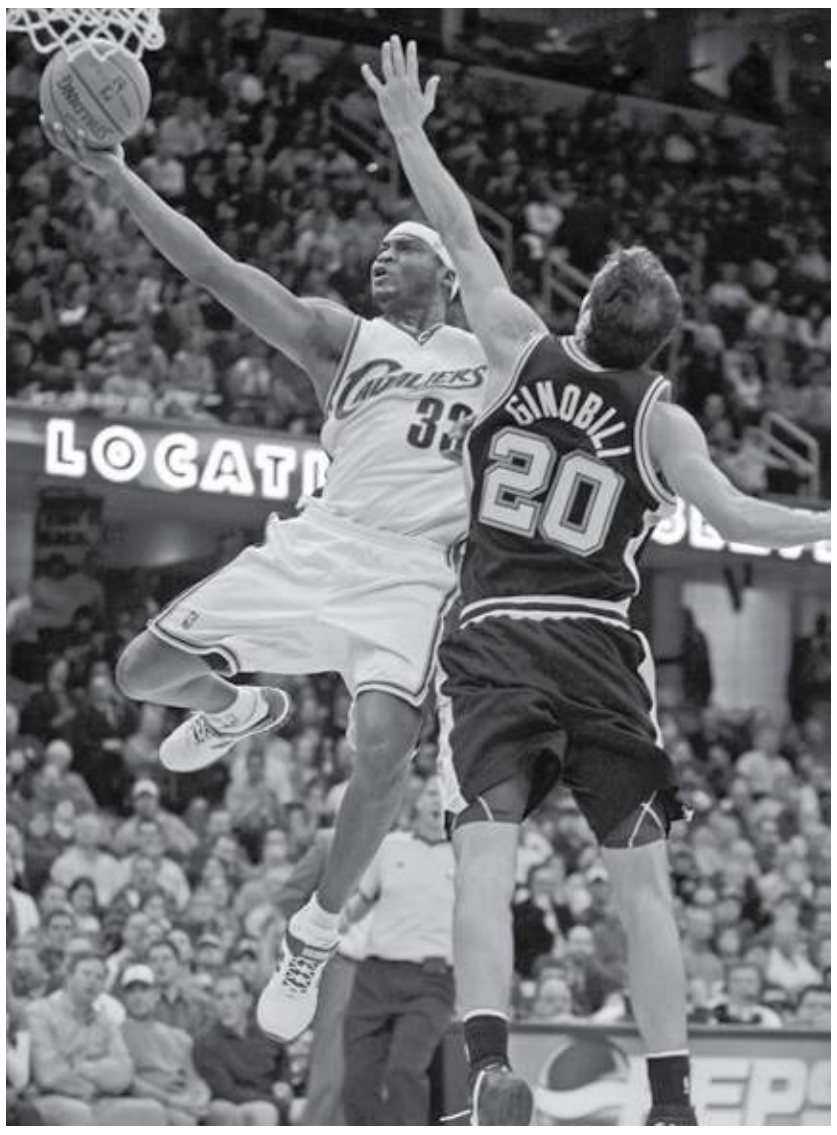
Goodell also said he reserves the right to reopen the investigation if more information is uncovered.

Manu Ginobli's hot shooting leads Spurs over Cavaliers

CLEVELAND (AP)—Manu Ginobili made a career-high eight 3-pointers and scored a season-high 46 points as the San Antonio Spurs downed the Cleveland Cavaliers 112-105 in the NBA on Wednesday.

Back on the court where they claimed the NBA title last year, the Spurs went 7-of-8 on 3-pointers, and shot 78 percent in the final 12 minutes.

Hitting shots from every corner of the floor, Ginobili scored 18 points in the fourth quarter.



AP

Cleveland Cavaliers' Devin Brown (33) shoots against San Antonio Spurs' Manu Ginobili (20), from Argentina, in the second quarter, in an NBA basketball game, Wednesday, Feb. 13, 2008, in Cleveland.

Rockets 89, Kings 87

In Houston, Steve Novak hit a 3-pointer with two seconds left as Houston beat Sacramento to record its eighth straight win.

The Kings rallied from an 18-point fourth quarter deficit and took the lead with 24 seconds left.

But Tracy McGrady drove into the lane and flicked the ball out to Novak for the winning shot and his only points of the game.

Houston's winning run has moved it into equal seventh in the Western Conference playoff standings.

Lakers 117, Timberwolves 92

In Minneapolis, Kobe Bryant scored 29 points to lead Los Angeles over Minnesota.

Pau Gasol pitched in another well-rounded game, Lamar Odom had a triple-double, and the Lakers moved within a game of Pacific Division leader Phoenix.

The Timberwolves lost their fifth straight game to remain rooted to the bottom of the Western Conference.

Pistons 96, Pacers 80

In Auburn Hills, Michigan, Detroit beat Indiana to win its 10th straight game.

Chauncey Billups, Tayshaun Prince and Richard Hamilton led a balanced attack with 14 points each for the Pistons, who are behind only Boston for the NBA's best record.

It was the Pistons' first season sweep of the Pacers since 1984-85.

Celtics 111, Knicks 103

In Boston, the home side beat New York to head into the All-Star break with a five-game winning streak.

Paul Pierce scored 24 points, and his newly minted All-Star teammate Ray Allen added 21 for the Celtics, who lost forwards Brian Scalabrine to a groin strain and Glen Davis to a quadriceps injury in the first half.

Warriors 120, Suns 118

In Oakland, California, Monta Ellis scored 37 points to send Golden State into the All-Star break with a win over Phoenix.

Baron Davis made three straight baskets down the stretch and the Warriors held on to win after Phoenix's Leandro Barbosa's 3-point attempt on the buzzer bounced off the rim.

Magic 109, Nuggets 98

In Orlando, Florida, Rashard Lewis scored 25 points to lead Orlando over Denver.

Dwight Howard had 23 points and 24 rebounds for the Southeast Division-leading Magic.

Denver slipped 1-1/2 games off Northwest Division leader Utah.

Mavericks 96, Trail Blazers 76

In Dallas, Dirk Nowitzki scored a season-high 37 points as Dallas downed Portland.

The victory came amid uncertainty over whether the Mavericks had secured New Jersey's Jason Kidd, with the trade hitting a snag when Dallas' Devean George opted out of a proposed player swap.

Portland goes into the All-Star break having lost four straight to slip momentarily out of playoff contention.

Raptors 109, Nets 91

In Toronto, Chris Bosh had 27 points and Toronto downed New Jersey.

Jose Calderon had 22 points and 12 assists as the Raptors took advantage of the absence of Jason Kidd, who was on the verge of a trade to Dallas.

The win snapped a three-game home losing streak for Toronto and kept them fifth in Eastern Conference playoff standings.

The Nets three-game winning streak came to an end and they remain tied for the last Eastern Conference playoff berth.

Jazz 112, SuperSonics 93

In Seattle, Carlos Boozer had 22 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists for his first triple-double as Utah soared into the All-Star break with victory over Seattle.

The Northwest Division-leading Jazz won for the 12th time in 13 games.

76ers 102, Grizzlies 88

In Philadelphia, the home side downed Memphis to record a fifth straight win.

Andre Iguodala had 29 points, eight rebounds and eight assists for the Sixers, who are seven games below .500 and second last in the Atlantic Division but still in playoff contention.

The Grizzlies dropped their ninth straight road game and are a long last in the Southwest Division.

Bobcats 100, Hawks 98 OT

In Charlotte, North Carolina, Jeff McInnis' hook shot with 51.4 seconds left in overtime gave Charlotte victory over Atlanta.

The Bobcats overcame a 14-point deficit in the second half to snap a seven-game losing streak.

The Hawks entered the All-Star break with four consecutive losses to be outside the Eastern Conference top eight.

Hornets 111, Bucks 107

In Milwaukee, Peja Stojakovic hit a 3-pointer with 15 seconds left to secure New Orleans' win over Milwaukee.

All-Stars David West and Chris Paul combined for 43 points for the Hornets.

The Bucks were seven points behind with 3:50 yet but hit the lead with 28 seconds to play, only to fall short.

Wizards 91, Clippers 89

In Los Angeles, Antawn Jamison tipped in a missed shot with three-tenths of a second left, giving Washington victory over Los Angeles.

The win snapped the Wizards' eight-game losing streak and put them sixth in the Eastern Conference.

Jamison scored 29 points for the Wizards.

Jason Kidd's trade to Mavs hits a snag

DALLAS (AP)—Jason Kidd appeared headed to the Dallas Mavericks on Wednesday— until Devean George's contract got in the way.

George was supposed to be among the players headed from Dallas to New Jersey, but he blocked it because of a virtual no-trade clause as part of a contract status called "early Bird rights."

After Dallas beat Portland on Wednesday night, Mavs coach Avery Johnson said there was "zero" chance the deal would get done, but added that was "as of now."

George then said there's still a chance things can be worked out. He was waiting to meet with his agent, Mark Bartelstein, to discuss their options.

"We're not trying to hold things up or be difficult, but just like teams make tough decisions all the time—about cutting players or making trades—they do what's best for their team, and it's my obligation to do what's best for Devean," Bartelstein said during the game. "You don't want to stop teams from doing their business, but we don't feel like it makes sense at this time."

Whether this is a setback or a deal-breaker will be determined in the coming days. The trade deadline is the afternoon of Feb. 21.

The deal was supposed to be George, emerging point guard Devin Harris, veteran Jerry Stackhouse and reserves DeSagana Diop and Maurice Ager going to New Jersey and Kidd, Malik Allen and Antoine Wright going to Dallas, according to a league source who spoke on condition of anonymity because it wasn't finalized.

The obstacle is simply George, who doesn't want to leave the Mavs even though he's been injured and struggled to find a spot in the rotation. He went 0-for-11 with no points in 33 minutes of Dallas' 96-76 victory Wednesday night.

Word George blocked the trade apparently spread throughout the arena because George said he heard fans hollering things like, "C'mon, what are you doing?" and, "Stop it, you're holding things up." Other lines included, "Quit being selfish," and "We want Kidd."

"All the finger-pointing is at me," he said. "I'm the bad guy. I'll take that."

George's "early Bird rights," which come from being on his second one-year deal, mainly give him a chance to sign for more than the salary cap allows. However, he's unlikely to command that much anyway. Still, he's able to take advantage now of the veto power that's also part of those rights, as per the NBA's collective bargaining agreement.

Nets coach Lawrence Frank was talking about life without his All-Star point guard prior to his team's 109-91 loss in Toronto.

"I love him. He's a very special person, but it's time for both him and the organization to part ways," Frank said. "We're giving up a Hall of Fame point guard and some good role players. If this deal goes through, we'll be receiving some very good players as well and a new era of Nets basketball will start because Jason is that significant a player."

Kidd, Allen and Wright were inactive for New Jersey. George and Diop played, while Harris, Stackhouse and Ager were inactive; Harris and Stackhouse are hurt and Ager is in the NBDL.

Stackhouse spoke before the game about moving on—or, rather, not going anywhere. He indicated the Nets would buy out his contract, enabling him to re-sign with Dallas in a month.

"Getting bought out, if that happens, my first choice would be to come back to Dallas. I'm settled in, just bought a house," he said.

Stackhouse added he was only part of the trade "to make the numbers work."

A move for Kidd is an indication the Mavs are in a win-now mode. He is 10 years older than the 24-year-old Harris. Dallas has been close in recent years, losing in the NBA finals in 2006, then winning 67 games last season before flaming out in the first round.

Mavs officials have been reluctant to shake up their roster, but a recent slump and the moves by conference rivals may have helped change their minds. It's worth noting that while team owner Mark Cuban has a reputation of being a risk-taker, Kidd would be the first front-line player he's traded for since getting Antoine Walker in October 2003.

"I think Devin has a lot of upside, but Jason Kidd is the type of all-league point guard our teams needs," Stackhouse said. "We just need a jolt. Adding a player like him can re-energize a team, hopefully."

Dallas and New Jersey were in serious talks about Kidd earlier this month. Stackhouse said it was almost nailed down Tuesday night, then called off, only to be revived again Wednesday morning.

The West is as competitive and deep as it's been in years, with several upstarts joining the perennial powers. The Lakers got the trade game going by plucking Pau Gasol from Memphis, then last week Phoenix traded for Shaquille O'Neal. San Antonio also has added point guard Damon Stoudamire to its rotation.

Dallas (34-17) was tied with the Lakers for the third-best record in the West.

"It's been kind of stagnant all season," Stackhouse said. "I think you just try to find the right piece. Maybe this is the right piece that really helps our team, that gets our scorers easy opportunities. Getting Pau or Shaq wouldn't have helped that case. Getting a point guard, that gets you easy opportunities. It solves that issue for us."

Kidd broke into the league in 1994-95 when Dallas made him the third overall pick. He was voted co-Rookie of the Year, but the club was such a mess it was better known as the Mav-wrecks.

He went to New Jersey from Phoenix before the 2001-02 season, then led the Nets to the NBA finals in each of his first two seasons. But they haven't gotten past the second round of the playoffs since. With the club well under .500, he's been looking to get traded for months.

Although Kidd turns 35 on March 23, he's still among the league's best point guards. He's averaging 11.3 points, 10.4 assists and 8.1 rebounds.

Sampson's future with Hoosiers in doubt

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. (AP)—Kelvin Sampson's future at Indiana was in doubt Wednesday following the release of an NCAA report that says he committed five "major" violations.

According to the report released Wednesday, the basketball coach and his assistants provided false and misleading information to university and NCAA officials.

The allegations, stem from a phone-call scandal that occurred while Sampson was still under recruiting restrictions following a similar episode at Oklahoma. The NCAA ruled in May 2006, less than two months after Sampson took the Indiana job, that the Sooners coaches made 577 illegal calls between 2000 and 2004.

The NCAA banned Sampson from calling recruits and making off-campus visits for a year.

In October, however, new allegations surfaced after an internal review.

Just five months after coming off of probation, an Indiana investigation found Sampson's staff made more than 100 impermissible calls, and that Sampson had participated in at least 10 three-way calls that were prohibited as part of the sanctions during his probationary period.

"It is regrettable, to say the least, that we are in this position, to respond to the allegations that have been made about several of our basketball coaches," athletic director Rick Greenspan said at a hastily arranged news conference.

"I'm personally, professionally and profoundly disappointed with even the hint of inappropriate behavior."

Sampson responded by reading a statement after Indiana's 68-66 loss to No. 15 Wisconsin on Wednesday night.

"The allegations that I knowingly acted contrary to the sanctions that occurred while I was at Oklahoma are not true," he said. "I have never intentionally provided false or misleading information to the NCAA. I intend to work within the NCAA process on this matter, and I look forward to my opportunity to do so."

He said he would not comment further until after an NCAA hearing in June. Sampson repeatedly refused to answer additional questions.

At the time of the Indiana investigation, Greenspan called the infractions secondary, although he said additional NCAA infractions could lead to Sampson's firing.

On Wednesday, following the release of the NCAA report, Greenspan would not say whether the school planned to impose additional sanctions, but acknowledged Sampson's contract contains a clause in which he could be fired for cause if the NCAA rules Sampson committed major violations.

AP

Indiana coach Kelvin Sampson, left, talks with Eric Gordon, center, and Lance Stemler while on the bench during the first half of a college basketball game against Wisconsin in Bloomington, Ind., Wednesday, Feb. 13, 2008.

Indiana has already forced Sampson to forfeit a $500,000 pay raise and one scholarship next season.

"I think the sanctions we established on Oct. 3, we felt were very significant and we felt very appropriate for the information at that point in time," Greenspan said. "Any additional self-imposed sanctions would come out of a collective thought process and we have not made any decision on that."

The NCAA saw the infractions as more serious than secondary violations.

The report said Sampson and his assistants failed to meet the "generally recognized high standard of honesty" expected in college sports and failed to promote an atmosphere of compliance within the program.

Greenspan promised Wednesday the university would cooperate with all NCAA requests.

Indiana has until May 8 to provide a written response. The report says Indiana officials will appear June 14 in Seattle at a hearing before the Division I infractions committee.

Major violations of NCAA rules can carry significant punishments, including postseason bans. Sampson could also be subjected to more recruiting restrictions and the imposition of a show-cause report, which would require any school that hires him to explain to the NCAA why he should be hired.

The NCAA reaffirmed some of Indiana's findings, that Sampson had engaged in a series of three-way calls that are permissible under NCAA rules but prohibited as part of the coach's previous NCAA punishment.

It also says Sampson was present when his staff called recruits, had assistant coach Rob Senderoff call a prospect and hand him the phone and knowingly participated in three-way calls with at least three recruits. Sampson contended he was aware of only one three-way call last fall. The report said Senderoff, who has since resigned from the staff, initiated those calls.

The NCAA also said Sampson failed to monitor his staff's phone call documentation, and Senderoff was accused of committing two of the most egregious infractions - lying to the university's enforcement staff and NCAA investigators and failing to abide by the NCAA's expected ethical standards.

He is accused of enabling the three-way calls, allowing Sampson to speak with recruits on a speaker phone and lying when he signed monthly statements denying use of his home phone for recruiting purposes. The NCAA found Senderoff made at least one recruiting call from his home phone during three months in 2006 and from February through July 2007.

"The institution reported that Senderoff placed at least 30 calls from his home phone that were violations of the restrictions imposed on the men's basketball staff by the committee on infractions," the report said.

Assistant coach Jeff Meyer was accused of having illegal contact with recruit Derek Elston during Indiana's basketball camp last summer and giving Elston a backpack and T-shirt, considered improper benefits under NCAA rules.

Meyer issued an apology through a lawyer, but that might not be enough to satisfy Greenspan and the Indiana administration.

"There have been discussions from me to the people I report to about what the next step is and that is to digest the implications of this," Greenspan said. "On the issue of personnel, my position has almost always been to make a recommendation to the president and ultimately the decision rests with the president. None of those decisions have been made."

Defense key in title duel between Giants, Realtors

Officiating may play crucial role, says Gregorio

MANILA, Philippines—After going through the pleasantries Wednesday, Purefoods and Sta. Lucia Realty now gird for battle in Friday's Game 1 of the Smart PBA Philippine Cup title series, which promises to be bruising more than anything before it.

"All we're asking for is consistency," Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio said, when asked whether he thought that the way Sta. Lucia plays defense bordered on the implementation of the rules.

"We can play the way they play (defense)," the youthful coach, seeking his second all-Filipino crown and third championship overall, added. "Just tell us how the rules (on fouls) will be implemented and we will play by it."

Gregorio will be up against a coach calling the shots in a title series for the first time in his career.

And Boyet Fernandez, a hard-nosed guard during his playing years, has transformed the Realtors basically as his mirror image on the defensive end.

"Whichever team defends better will win this series," said Fernandez, who was joined by his entire squad in a pre-Finals press conference Wednesday in Manila. "This team (Sta. Lucia) thrives on defense.

"If we are to win this series, it will be because of our effort on the defensive end."

Fernandez, who will be gunning for his first title as a player and coach, and the Realtors ended up topping the defensive category after the semifinals.

But he is expected to have his hands full against Gregorio, whose Tender Juicy Giants were the close runners-up in the same department.

Both squads were present during the briefing, and players and coaches from both camps exchanged hugs and wished each other luck before they plunge into war starting at 7:20 p.m. Friday at the Araneta Coliseum in Cubao, Quezon City.

Sta. Lucia allowed an average of 89.48 points per game after the semifinals, while the Giants gave up 91.08 points.

The two dominated the elimination round then ousted two formidable teams in the Final Four.

While both teams can play defense, their respective offensive armadas are as formidable as any team in the tournament.

Focus on the Purefoods offense will be on James Yap and Kerby Raymundo, the Giants' 1-2 punch who have started in each of their 25 games.

But Gregorio came up with a naughty grin when asked if he has other players who could take up the slack when his two stars don't perform well.

Sta. Lucia has never had a team as well-rounded as this one, and skipper Dennis Espino pointed this out when someone asked what the true weapon of the Realtors would be in these Finals. ***(PDI)***

FORMER

From Page 44

was not complaining if he was feeling something. He was very athletic and physically fit, we even thought that he just passed out and all he needed was some rest. We were not expecting this tragedy."

Brigino said Alegre's relatives are already discussing funeral plans with the management of Aqua Resort and the Philippine Consulate as they prepare to bring his remains back in the Philippines.

Organizers of the HANMI Cup postponed the scheduled games on Sunday to allow players of participating teams to pay their respects to Alegre.

Alegre is a veteran guard that has won numerous individual and championship titles in various basketball leagues on Saipan and coached teams to championships. He is also a well-respected referee.

He has more than 50 scoring, assists, and steals, trophies and is one of the first Filipinos to suit up for the CNMI. He saw action in the 2002 Micronesian Games in Pohnpei and the 2003 Micronesian Basketball Tournament in Koror, Palau.

The 5-foot-10 Alegre also had per game averages of 22 points, eight assists, and 2.5 steals during the 2001 basketball season of the Philippine Independence League.

He led perennial title contender Samahang Ilokano at Pangasinense to a 118-104 win over Country House-Cavite Association to complete their back-to-back title bid in the 2nd Annual PIL. He scored 25 points in that title-clinching win and was also named finals most valuable player.

He was also named finals MVP after leading Keeraku to consecutive titles in the Inter Hotel and Restaurant League, 2001 and 2000, and also led SIP to three consecutive UFO titles from 2000 to 2002 and regained the crown in 2004.

Alegre also led SIP to the championship in the 2005 MDX Amateur Radio Club Inter-color Basketball League by downing JCN Enterprises, 102-87. His last championship was in the 2007 BANMI Budweiser Cup where he helped Rock Steady win the crown after beating the Saipan Stevedore Suns, 92-78, in the finals last Feb. 1.

HYATT

From Page 44

Hyatt has not lost since suffering a 78-84 loss to Pacific Islands Club last Jan. 27. The win also improved Hyatt's record to 4-3 as they regained fourth place from league darkhorse Hafadai Beach Hotel, 3-3.

It was also a revenge of sorts for Hyatt avenging their 74-84 loss to Aqua in the opening game of the HANMI Cp on Dec. 2.

Aqua Resort's loss relegated them to second place with a 5-2 mark leaving Fiesta-Grand Hotel, which scored a 110-86 rout of Aquarius Beach Tower in the first game, alone on top with a league-best 6-1 record.

Krisgel Arreza and Steven Tenorio made crucial points for Hyatt in overtime to help their team secure the win.

An Arreza 3-pointer, in the 4:29 mark in overtime, ignited a 13-4 Hyatt run to put the game away. Tenorio then capped that scoring exchange with two free throws off Darwin Barbo's fifth foul time down to 1:55.

Ziddy Johannes could have won it for Aqua Resort in regulation, but missed three straight free throws. Aqua Resort was leading at 82-80 when Arreza fouled Johannes with 21.9 ticks left, but the usually reliable guard missed both free throws.

Arreza nearly played the goat on Hyatt's next possession when he turned over the ball with 13.4 seconds left.

Aqua Resort, however, committed a turnover at the other end when Glen Aquino, inbounding at mid court, was called for a backing violation after throwing an inbound pass to Mike Achas, who was standing on the other side of the court.

Arreza made up for his earlier turnover and scored on a put-back off an Edmark Mendoza missed layup with three seconds remaining in the game. Tenorio then prevented a last-minute fastbreak attempt by Aqua Resort when he stole an Achas pass to Aquino as time expired.

It was a seesaw battle and defensive game as both teams traded scoring runs and spurts in the entire match.

Hyatt even jumped on a 6-0 lead early in the first quarter as they held Aqua Resort scoreless for almost four minutes. Johannes scored Aqua Resort's first basket in the 6:58 mark of the opening period.

Bernard Aquino paced Hyatt with 21 points and seven rebounds, while Mendoza, who was scoreless in overtime, scattered 18 points and had a game-high 13 rebounds, four assists, and three steals.

Arman Magno also had 13 rebounds and scored 17 points to go with his three steals and one block, while Tenorio and Arreza combined for 29 points, seven rebounds, and three assists.

Mike Umali and Dexter Dillay combined for 12 points, six rebounds, and four assists off the bench.

Barbo led Aqua Resort's losing cause scoring 23 points, while grabbing five rebounds to go with his three assists and five steals. Gil Gapor backed him up with 16 markers, nine rebounds, two assists, and two steals.

Alegre managed to score 13 points, grab nine rebounds, issue six assists, and made three steals before being rushed to the Commonwealth Health Center.

Achas and Aquino combined for 21 points, 11 rebounds, two assists, and four steals.

In the first game, Ryan Sanciangco had 21 points to lead Fiesta-Grand's balanced scoring in a 110-86 thrashing of Aquarius Beach Tower.

Ariel Jinang, Elmer Esdrelon, and Edilberto Carino added 16, 15, and 14 points, while Ryan Manglona and Jon March Ong combined for 20 points and 13 rebounds.

George Barbo topped the scoring for Aquarius with 36 points, while Rick Brien chipped in 21 markers. Barbo and Brien also combined for 12 rebounds and 10 assists.

First Game

Fiesta-Grand 110 – Sanciangco 21, Jinang 16, Esdrelon 15, Carino 14, Manglona 10, Ong 10, Dela Torre 9, Opone 8, Licup 4, Sabino 2, Maliwanag 1.

Aquarius Beach Tower 86 – Barbo 36, Brien 21, Alvarez 9, Camacho 8, Achas 4, Cordero 4, Trajano 4.

Scoring by quarters: 36-22, 60-39, 89-60, 110-86.

Second Game

Hyatt Regency Saipan 97 – Aquino 21, Mendoza 18, Magno 17, Tenorio 15, Arreza 14, Umali 8, Dillay 4.

Aqua Resort Club 93 – Barbo 23, Gapor 16, Alegre 13, M. Achas 11, Aquino 10, Takahashi 8, Johannes 6, Casabuena 4, Torres 2.

Scoring by quarters: 12-20, 36-63, 63-60, 82-82, 97-93.

HYATT

From Page 44

Race, Eric Abragan, Nicolas Son, Isagani Cortes, Eli Dolera, Brian Hom, and Sonny Decena, who are all listed in the men's open singles.

Heo said he trains regularly at Gold's Gym every Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from between 3pm to 5pm. He then attends Race's regular classes every Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5pm to 7pm at the Pacific Islands Club courts.

He goes home after his daily grind to eat dinner then return at PIC at 8pm to play another 90 minutes with his father, who feeds him the balls to practice his strokes and serve.

"I am thankful that [coach] Jeff is allowing me to use his tennis balls for practice. Although I would like to practice more, it's a bit hard because I [still] have school," said Heo.

Heo added that he also plans to go to Korea for two weeks to play in the Lee Duk Hee Korean International Junior Championships and the Jeju International Junior Championshpips, which are both ITF junior tournaments.

"Then I plan on playing in the Hilton tournament which is probably in May held in Guam," said Heo, who will also return to Fiji in June to join in a couple of junior tournaments.

After Fiji, Heo will travel with other ITF junior players in New Caledonia to play in an ITF tournament. He then returns to Fiji to train again at the ITF training facility in Lautoka as part of his preparation for the Air South Pacific Junior Championships and the Oceania Closed Junior Championships, which are also both ITF tournaments.

"I will try to play many ITF tournaments this year to get a ranking. That is all I have planned for now," Heo ended.

SSC

From Page 44

Stewart said he expects Johnson to improve her times in the 200m and 400m freestyle events in the 15-16 age group. "Sarah is still young, I know Sarah will get both records sometime in the future."

"It would be nice for her to have a quantum leap this weekend, and knock one or both of them off. Her sprint freestyle and backstroke events will be quite good as well."

Stewart also expects Chentsova and Martinsen, the youngest members of the team, to also improve their times. They will be competing in the 50m, 100m, and 200m freestyle as well as the 50m 100m backstroke, and the 50m breaststroke, and butterfly.

Sprinters Nicholls and Pamaran will concentrate on the shorter freestyle events in the 50m, 100m, 200m. "While [Nicholls] excels in the 50m and 100m backstrokes, [Pamaran] will compete in the 50 and 100m breaststroke events."

Moran and Lapuz, both newcomers, have been excelling in freestyle events they have been improving in breaststroke and individual medley.

Stewart said Graf is their most versatile swimmer. "[Cooper] will be swimming just about every event possible. [He] is entered in all freestyle events, the 100m, 200m butterfly, 200m individual medley, two backstroke, and one breaststroke events.

"I like [Cooper's] chances in the 400m freestyle. We are focusing on [his] 800m 15-16 age-group record, with a good swim here I think it can give [Cooper] enough confidence in his racing abilities to spring board him to surpass the 800m record in the near future."

After the Far North Queensland Swimming Championships, SSC will next prepare for the International Invitational from Febraury to March 1 where four off-island teams have made commitments to compete.

The weekend events end with the 30th Annual SSC Ocean Swim around the tanks on March 2, Sunday.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	41	9	.820	–
Toronto	28	23	.549	13 1/2
New Jersey	23	30	.434	19 1/2
Philadelphia	23	30	.434	19 1/2
New York	15	37	.288	27

Southeast Division

Orlando	33	21	.611	–
Washington	25	27	.481	7
Atlanta	21	28	.429	9 1/2
Charlotte	19	34	.358	13 1/2
Miami	9	41	.180	22

Central Division

Detroit	39	13	.750	–
Cleveland	29	23	.558	10
Indiana	21	32	.396	18 1/2
Chicago	20	31	.392	18 1/2
Milwaukee	19	34	.358	20 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

New Orleans	36	15	.706	–
Dallas	35	17	.673	1 1/2
San Antonio	34	17	.667	2
Houston	32	20	.615	4 1/2
Memphis	14	38	.269	22 1/2

Northwest Division

Utah	34	19	.642	–
Denver	32	20	.615	1 1/2
Portland	28	24	.538	5 1/2
Seattle	13	38	.255	20
Minnesota	10	41	.196	23

Pacific Division

Phoenix	36	16	.692	–
L.A. Lakers	35	17	.673	1
Golden State	32	20	.615	4
Sacramento	23	28	.451	12 1/2
L.A. Clippers	17	33	.340	18

Yesterday's Games

Orlando 109, Denver 98
Toronto 109, New Jersey 91
Philadelphia 102, Memphis 88
Charlotte 100, Atlanta 98, OT
San Antonio 112, Cleveland 105
Boston 111, New York 103
Detroit 96, Indiana 80
New Orleans 111, Milwaukee 107
L.A. Lakers 117, Minnesota 92
Houston 89, Sacramento 87
Dallas 96, Portland 76
Golden State 120, Phoenix 118
Utah 112, Seattle 93
Washington 91, L.A. Clippers 89

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOCAL SCORES

HANMI Cup Standings

Fiesta-Grand Hotel	6	1
Aquarius Resort Club	5	2
Pacific Islands Club	4	2
Hyatt Regency Saipan	4	3
Hafadai Beach Hotel	3	3
Saipan World Resort	2	5
Aquarius Beach Tower	0	6

Tudela tops women's golf this month

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

Terry Tudela edged Lou Kim by a stroke to win the February tee off of the CNMI Women's Golf Association tournament held last Saturday at the Coral Ocean Point Golf Resort in Kobleville.

Tudela carded a net score of 71 to beat Kim's 72 following a 42 and 48 in the front and back nines for a gross of 90. Her score was slashed by 19 strokes because of her USGA handicap.

The 13-handicap Kim, for her part, wound up with a tourney best gross of 85 after shooting superb scores of 42 in the first nine holes and 43 in the final nines holes.

Matilde Hocog was second runner-up for February with her net of 73 built around a 94 gross (45-49) and a 21-handicap.

Margaret Tenorio and Masayo M. completed the Top 5 for February with net scores of 75 (108 gross, 53-55 front and back nines, 33 handicap) and 76 (86, 43-43, 10), respectively.

Shirlyn Jones (net 76), Noriko Togawa (77), Shiori Onue (77), Yuko Togawa (78), Abe K. (78), Bobbie Guerrero (81), Doll Yamagishi (82), Aya Matsumoto (82), Lorraine Babauta (83), Ukita T. (85), and Myumi M. (107 gross) also took part in the February tee off.

Established in March 2007, CWGA is a nonprofit organization founded to promote, encourage, and introduce women to the sport of golf in the CNMI.

In elections held during the same month, Noriko Togawa was voted as president, Kim as vice president, Matsumoto as treasurer, Babauta as secretary, and Tudela, Guerrero, and Yamagishi acting as directors.

The organization intends to accomplish the following: 1. Promote civic and community interest in golf; 2. Establish and encourage competition and good sportsmanship; 3. Promote and provide social functions of the members and their families; 4. Promote youth golf activities; and 5. To do any or all things necessary and proper to accomplish its purpose and intention.

CWGA also commits its members to abide by a set of values that will further enrich a golfer's performance, attitude, and conduct-adopted form the USA Junior Golf Association.

The set of values members of CWGA are committed to faithfully are as follows: perseverance; sportsmanship; respect; honesty; judgment; responsibility; reliance; courtesy; and sincerity.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Participants of last Saturday's February Ace of the Month Tournament of the CNMI Women's Golf Association pose for a photo following their match at the Coral Ocean Point Golf Resort in Kobleville.

RGA monthly ace this Saturday

Refaluwasch Golf Association February Ace of the Month Tournament will be held on Feb. 16, Saturday, at the Kingfisher Golf Links in Talafofo.

Check-in time for the competition is 11:30am with tee off set an hour later at 12:30pm. The score to beat is the net 67 scored by Ed "Doi" Tenorio during the club's monthly qualifier held last Feb. 2 also at Kingfisher.

The 12-handicap golfer arrived at the 67 net following a 39-40 in the back and front nines gave him a gross score of 79.

Tenorio actually finished tied with Asterio Tawanpiy, but beat out the son of the islands' master navigator in the front nine net score, 33-35.

Tawanpiy, for his part, carded a 42-39 to come away with a gross of 81, which minus his 14 handicap, tied him with Tenorio.

Bill Kaipat was a stroke off the co-leaders' pace with his net 68, after shooting a gross of 76 based on the eight-handicap swinger's 40-36 (76) back and front nine record.

RGA president "emeritus" and current tournament director Jess Wabol and Department of Public Works Joe Demapan round out the Top 5 in last weekend's event with their net scores of 68 and 71, respectively.

Wabol reminded the public that the club has halved its membership dues for 2008 from the long-standing fee of $50 to only $25.

Wabol said this happened after RGA recognized the hard economic times and decided to give its members and future members a break by slashing the cost of becoming part of RGA.

He said he hopes by making membership in RGA a little lighter in the pocket, more weekend warriors will now return to the golf links and renew their membership or apply as new members of the golf club.

Wabol added that RGA is also instituting a new promotion this year wherein members who take part in at least 10 rounds by the time the annual RGA Turkey Shoot in November comes around, will get free entry into the tournament.

For more information about RGA's upcoming February Ace of the Month Tournament, new membership policies, and other competitions held by the club, contact Hardwicke at 483-2926 or Wabol at 233-3673. ***(Mark Rabago)***

SGA February Ace tomorrow

The Saipan Golf Association will hold its February Ace of the Month Tournament tomorrow, Feb. 16, at the Kingfisher Golf Links in Talafofo.

Check-in time for the club's first monthly competition of the year is 11am with tee time set an hour and a half later at 12:30pm. Slots will be available for the first 24 entrants.

After the round, president Martin Sablan will hold an organization meeting.

Anyone interested in joining SGA or need more information about the club, should contact Joe Sablan, Larry Guerrero, and Ben Aldan at 287-4563, 287-1052, or 234-3176, respectively. ***(Mark Rabago)***

Weigh-in today for 'The Uproar' fighters

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Fighters that will see action in Rites of Passage IV: The Uproar this weekend will be weighed in today at 5pm at the Trench Tech Purebred Gym behind Moylan's Insurance.

Fight organizer Cuki Alvarez is reminding all fighters in the 17 matches to be at the Trench Tech Gym for the weigh-in. Alvarez will also discuss the official rules of ROP IV to all fighters.

"If fighters fail to show up they can be scratched out from their respective bouts," Alvarez said.

ROP IV will be held tomorrow, Saturday, at the Trench Tech Purebred Gym where with Tech's "Badd" Brad Palacios facing Maitai Charlie of Team Marianas Elite in the main event.

Palacios was supposed to face freestyle fighter Martin Ayuyu in tomorrow's main event but the latter got injured while training for the fight.

Before the Palacios-Charlie main event match, 17 other matches will take place. Alvarez, however, reminded fight fans that the fight card is subject to change.

Team Haga's Carl Jesse Takai will face Shane "Pika Boo" Alvarez of Trench Tech as both 130-lb. fighters open up Saturday's no-holds barred event. The Gregory Camacho-Gino "Asu" Asanuma match will follow shortly.

J.J. "The Mauler Malite of Team Pwang will clash with Trench Tech's Pete "Gun" Borja while Perry Takai battles Reagan Malite in the next match.

Rick "2-Slick" San Nicolas of South Side Syndicates faces Trench Tech's Ron Chisato, while Gracie Barra's Jesse Santos (115 lbs) tackles Zalaka's Lyle Deleon Guerrero (118 lbs).

Pwang's Peter Keju takes on Tom Kim, while Japan's Joji battles Faustino Litulumar, while Alex Takeo will trade punches with Alvin Taitano in the ninth match of the night. Independent fighter A.J. Cepeda will face Team Tinian's Johmar Untalan in a grudge match.

Another Independent fighter, Rob "Pitbull" Palacios will clash with Ponapeii Power's Joseph Seman, while Mark Hapdei collides with Joe Rabauliman in the night's lone heavyweight match.

Zalaka's Arnold Balbin will stake his yearlong training against Stan "Bad Intentions" Tapuaialupe Iakopo of Team Samoa, while Team Tinian's Conrad Iba will face J.D. "Out" Reyes in the semi event.

Alvarez also prepared three standby consolation matches between the 240-lb. Jeff Norita against the 235-lb. Ton Cabrera, while Nate "Nats' Flores will take on C.J. Kladikan. Chris Layug will face Ben Mettao in the battle of 140-pounders.

Alvarez is reminding fight fans that they can still purchase their tickets, at $20 each, at Boarderline, Da Rock-steady Shop, and Trench Tech. "There are only a few left and most likely will be sold out by fight night. We will however be selling tickets at the door but very limited. Seating is first come, first served."

Rites of Passage is the proving grounds for up-and-coming young warriors who want to test their MMA skills in front of a smaller crowd and see whether they could make it to big no-holds barred fights inside the octagon.

Rookie warriors who win their fights would get the chance to earn an invitation to Trench Warz VIII, which is tentatively set on June 8.

For more information, call Alvarez at 483-4MMA or 483-4662.

JON PEREZ
"Badd" Brad Palacios tries to get out of Juan Tenorio's chokehold in their match in one of the fight events organized by Trench Tech last year at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Tudela tops women's golf this month

Terry Tudela edged Lou Kim by a stroke to win the February tee off of the CNMI Women's Golf Association tournament held last Saturday at the Coral Ocean Point Golf Resort in Kobleville.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Clemens takes his lumps on Capitol Hill

Roger Clemens stuck out his famous right arm, the one that earned 354 major league wins, seven Cy Young Awards, $160 million, and pointed in the direction of his accuser. Without looking at Brian commits.

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Former national cager dies

HANMI Cup postpones Sunday tripleheader

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Tragedy struck the Aqua Resort Club-Hyatt Regency Saipan match on Wednesday night when veteran cager Roderick Arconado Alegre died while playing in the 2nd Annual HANMI Cup Inter-Hotel Basketball League.

Alegre, who was widely known as Rick in the CNMI basketball scene and was a former CNMI Men's National Basketball team player, suffered in what could have been a possible heart attack.

Initial investigation by the Department of Public Safety, which received a report of an injured person at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium at 10:57pm, Alegre was playing basketball and then went to the bench to rest and drink water.

DPS public information officer Lei Ogumoro, in a press release, said Alegre then collapsed a few minutes later and police then where called. "Medics arrived and performed CPR on the victim. Medics then immediately transported the victim to the Commonwealth Health Center."

Dr. Patrick Tong later pronounced Alegre dead at 11:41pm. He was 39.

The incident happened during a timeout in Aqua Resort's HANMI Cup game against Hyatt, where Alegre was playing for defending champion Aqua Resort. Hyatt called the timeout.

Aqua Resort coach Emi Brigino, in a telephone interview, said Alegre was still talking and discussing their next play with his teammates when he stood up and slowly collapsed. "He just came from work and we even left Aqua Resort at the same time. We came in late so that is why he came in the game in the second quarter."

"I did not see anything wrong with him and he

See FORMER on Page 42

JON PEREZ
Aqua Resort Club's Rick Alegre, left, in action before succumbing to a heart attack in their game in the 2nd Annual HANMI Cup Inter-Hotel Basketball League Wednesday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Hyatt edges Aqua in OT

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Hyatt Regency Saipan streaked to its third straight win in the 2nd Annual HANMI Cup Inter-Hotel Basketball League Wednesday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Hyatt pulled off a 97-93 overtime win over defending champion Aqua Resort Club. But tragedy overshadowed Hyatt's win after one of Aqua Resort's veteran players died during the match.

See HYATT on Page 42

JON PEREZ
Hyatt Regency Saipan's Arman Magno, left, looks for an open teammate as Amor Casabuena of defending champion Aqua Resort Club defends him in their Wednesday night's game in the HANMI Cup 2nd Annual Inter-Hotel Basketball League at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Heo has change of heart, joins Coconut Classic

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

CNMI's top junior netter Ji Hoon Heo had a change of heart and decided to join the 2008 Coconut Classic Tennis Tournament, which starts tomorrow at the American Memorial Park courts.

The event, which is the first tournament organized by the Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association, will take place during the President's Day weekend.

Heo earlier said that he would skip a number of local tournaments to concentrate more with his training as he hope to join more International Tennis Federation-organized junior tournaments.

"I'll [still] be skipping a couple of local [tournaments] but [coach] Jeff advised me that I should play if I am here. So whenever I'm here, I would be playing the tournaments but not all of them."

Heo will start his Coconut Classic campaign tomorrow at 12nn. It is not yet known who is Heo's first opponent but he would contend the title with

See HEO on Page 42

SSC swimmers leave for Land Down Under

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

An eight-member swimming crew of the Saipan Swim Club left Saipan yesterday to compete on Feb. 16 and 17 in the Far North Queensland Swimming Championships in Cairns, Australia.

The members of the eight-person team are Victoria Chentsova and Abigail Martinsen (10 years old); 13-year-old Lester Lapuz; 14-year-old Michael Moran Jr.; and 15-year-olds Cooper Graf, Sarah Johnson, and Blair Nicholls; and 17-year-old Junior Pamaran.

The eight-member SSC crew will battle 190 other swimmers from 13 teams from the host and other countries.

SSC coach Mike Stewart said he is looking for an 80-percent improvement in his swimmers' life-time best times in their respective events. "With strong performances from all these swimmers two weeks ago in the 3rd Annual Heptathlon, I look for some CNMI Age Group records to be threatened [or broken]."

See SSC on Page 42

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Eight swimmers from the Saipan Swim Club join head coach Michael Stewart and their parents at the Saipan International Airport before leaving for Cairns, Australia where they will compete in the Far North Queensland Swimming Championships from Feb. 16 and 17.